ANIMAL LOVER'S KNAPSACK

Edwin O. Grover

FROM AMONG
THE BOOKS OF
RUTH COMMAGERE

Aug 20, 1931

Ruth

THE ANIMAL LOVER'S KNAPSACK

"THE KNAPSACK BOOKS"

By Edwin Osgood Grover

1. The Nature Lover's Knapsack

2. The Animal Lover's Knapsack

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THE ANIMAL LOVER'S KNAPSACK

AN ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS FOR LOVERS OF OUR ANIMAL FRIENDS

Edited by

EDWIN OSGOOD GROVER

Professor of Books, Rollins College

There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a brute which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere man.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

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To

ALL THOSE WHO LOVE LIFE

Wherever

They Find It

Our Animal Friends

EVER since the first wolf was whistled to man's heel, the dog has been recognized as man's best friend. He personifies faithfulness in his devotion to his master; his loyalty is unchanging and his master's voice is the voice of his only god.

In a similar way the purring kitten has become something more than a fireside decoration. For sheer friendliness the household cat holds a lasting place in the affections of thousands of people who have found companionship in these little bundles of furry playfulness. The hold which both cats and dogs have acquired on our human heartstrings is evidenced by the "cat and dog cemeteries at Hartsdale, N. Y. and elsewhere—in which marble tablets and granite shafts tell of their long and faithful devotion, and record the honest grief of their masters at their loss.

So in turn, the horse, the lamb, the rabbit and the canary—indeed almost every living thing—has become for some of us, a pet, a trusted protector, an entertaining comrade, or a useful friend.

Man loves life wherever he sees it, and when coupled with friendliness, or song, or beauty, he longs to make it his own. If man is incorrigibly religious, he is also incorrigibly a lover of animals, and nothing that lives and moves is too large or too small, too dainty or too ugly, to escape his instinct to make it his playmate or his pet. This is as it should be, for we are all God's creatures and our brothers of the wood and field, of the blue waters and the vibrant air, are also in His keeping and do His will.

Next to the love of a man for his fellows, the love of a boy for his dog is the most beautiful and the most divine. Every time we lift up our heads at the song of a bird, every time we stroke a purring kitten, every time we smile at a

cricket's chirp, every time we scold at a raucous crow, we are recognizing our kinship with all of God's living things. It is our poor substitute for the hand-shake and the spoken word.

In compiling this Anthology the editor was surprised to find how nearly universal was this spirit of fellowship for all living things on the part of the poets. The available material was both rich and varied. For this reason the book could not be a compendium. It presents only a personal selection of what is hoped will prove the most attractive of the many tributes to our animal friends.

In order to make the book available as a companion, whether in the knapsack or the traveling bag, it has been made easy to hold and easy to carry. If it proves to be such a companion it will have justified its title.

EDWIN OSGOOD GROVER

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Man's Best Friend, the Dog

Man's Best Friend

THE one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog.

A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.

If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him to guard against danger, to fight against his enemies; and when the last scene of all comes, and death takes the master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there, by his grave-side, will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even to death.

GEORGE GRAHAM VEST

Your Dog

I ASK you, Master, just as dog to man,
(Explain it in our language, if you can)
Why Tabby, there, should have nine lives to live,
When I, *your dog,* have only one to give?

A cat! She's always greedy for her cream,
And cares for nothing but to doze and dream;
So smug and satisfied, she maddens me!
(She knows I hate her, sitting on *your* knee.)

You taught me, Master, everything I know.
Your friend is my friend—and your foe, my foe.
Can Tabby tell, or does she think she can,
How close a one-man dog lives to *his man?*

Once, when you lost your bearings in the fog,
Who was so keen to find you as your dog?
Did Tabby feel your danger, scent your track,
And leave her cozy hearth to bring you back?

When we came limping home, what did she do?
Just waked up long enough to yawn, "That you?"
Oh, yes, a cat may have nine lives to live,
But tell me, has she even one to give?

That stormy night you found me, picked me up—
A friendless, starving, vagrant little pup—
And brought me home, and named me, it was sweet
To lay my one life wholly at your feet!

It isn't that I'm jealous of the cat.
She may have nine, or ninety lives, at that.
But just to see her sitting on *your* knee,
Gosh, Master, lem'me run her up that tree!

Elizabeth P. Morse

To My Dog "Blanco"

MY dear dumb friend, low lying there,
A willing vassal at my feet,—
Glad partner of my home and fare,
My shadow in the street,—

I look into your great brown eyes,
Where love and loyal homage shine,
And wonder where the difference lies
Between your soul and mine.

For all of good that I have found
Within myself or human kind
Hath royally informed and crowned
Your gentle heart and mind.

I scan the whole broad earth around
For that one heart which, leal and true,
Bears friendship without end or bound,
And find the prize in you.

I trust you as I trust the stars;
Nor cruel loss, nor scoff, nor pride,
Nor beggary, nor dungeon bars,
Can move you from my side.

As patient under injury
As any Christian saint of old;
As gentle as a lamb with me,
But with your brothers bold.

More playful than a frolic boy,
More watchful than a sentinel—

By day and night your constant joy
To guard and please me well.

I clasp your head upon my breast—
The while you whine and lick my hand—
And thus our friendship is confessed,
And thus we understand.

Ah, Blanco! Did I worship God
As truly as you worship me,
Or follow where my Master trod,
With your humility—

Did I sit fondly at His feet,
As you, dear Blanco, sit at mine,
And watch Him with a love as sweet,
My life would grow divine.

J. G. Holland

The Song of Quoodle

THEY haven't got no noses,
The fallen sons of Eve;
Even the smell of roses
Is not what they supposes;
But more than mind discloses
And more than men believe.

They haven't got no noses,
They cannot even tell
When door and darkness closes
The park a Jew encloses,
When even the Law of Moses
Will let you steal a smell.

The brilliant smell of water,
The brave smell of a stone,
The smell of dew and thunder,
The old bones buried under,
Are things in which they blunder
And err, if left alone.

The wind from winter forests,
The scent of scentless flowers,
The breath of brides' adorning,
The smell of snare and warning,
The smell of Sunday morning,
God gave to us for ours.

And Quoodle here discloses
All things that Quoodle can,
They haven't got no noses,
They haven't got no noses,
And goodness only knowses
The Noselessness of Man.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

My Fox Terrier

A LITTLE demon in defense,
Brave as a lion he;
I wish I had the courage
Of this atom on my knee.

A little universe of love,
Unselfish as the sea;
I wish I did by others
As he has done by me.

A little lump of loyalty
No power could turn from me;
I wish I had a heart as true,
From fear and favor free.

A little fountain full of faith,
Forgiveness, charity;
I wish I had his patience
And true nobility.

A little flash of fire and life,
Whate'er the summons be;
I wish that I could face the world
With half his energy.

A little white fox terrier,
In whose brown eyes I see
The windows of a faithful soul
Too large to live in me.

Harry W. French

Comrade

HE is alert, impetuous and fleet;
One cannot plumb the depths of his dark eyes,
Now joyful, tender, full of vague surprise,
Now gentle, pleading, seeming to entreat.
There is a music in his running feet,
A soft note of contentment in his sighs;
For him each time the dawn ascends the skies
New joy is born, and he fares forth to meet
Life's great adventures with a courage found
In far too few of those who walk earth's way,
For where we blindly grope as through a fog
He goes all fearless on his busy round,
Then dashes back to brighten our dull day—
Nelson, our friend, our comrade and our dog!

Elisabeth Scollard

A Dog's Grave

HE sleeps where he would wish, in easy call,
Here in a primrose nook beside the wall,
And near the gate, that he may guard us all
Even in death, our faithful seneschal.

I do not think the courteous Cherubim
Will chide him if he waits, nor Seraphim
Summon him hence till we may follow him
Who knew no Heaven without—faithful Tim.

Winifred M. Letts

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To a Little Deaf Dog

WHAT do you think, dear little friend,
Of the silence that has come?
Why do you think—poor little friend—
The voices loved are dumb?

Does the simple creed of perfect love,
That held you firm all through,
Still fill your faithful little life
And make it right for you?

From your deep eyes the same old trust
Beams up into my own,
And from the joy that in them lies—
You do not feel alone.

But when with head upon my knee
You gaze so wistfully,
I hope, old man, you understand
The fault lies not in me.

I trust that you who know so much,
And yet so little too,
Through your sweet dog philosophy
Know that my love holds true.

Ethellyn Brewer DeFoe

The Yellow Dog

IT was a little yellow dog, a wistful thing to see,
A homely, skinny, battered pup, as dirty as could be;
His ribs were showing through his hide, his coat was thick with mud,
And yet the way he wagged his tail completely captured Bud.

He had been kicked from door to door and stoned upon his way.
"Be gone!" was all he'd ever heard, 'twas all that folks would say;
And yet this miserable cur, forever doomed to roam,
Struck up a comradeship with Bud, who proudly brought him home.

I've never seen so poor a dog in all my stretch of years,
The burrs were thick upon his tail and thick upon his ears;
He'd had to fight his way through life and carried many a scar,
But still Bud brought him home and cried, "Say, can I keep him, Ma?"

I think the homeless terrier knows that age is harsh and stern,
And from the shabby things of life in scorn is quick to turn;
And when some scrubby yellow dog needs sympathy and joy,
He's certain of a friend in need, if he can find a boy.

Edgar A. Guest

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To "Scott" a Collie

OLD friend, your place is empty now. No more
Shall we obey the imperious, deep-mouthed call
That begged the instant freedom of our hall.
We shall not trace your foot-fall on the floor
Nor hear your urgent paws upon the door.
The loud-thumped tail that welcomed one and all,
The volleyed bark that nightly would appall
Our tim'rous errand boys—these things are o'er.

But always yours shall be a household name,
And other dogs must list' your storied fame;
So gallant and so courteous, Scott, you were,
Mighty abroad, at home most debonair.
Now God who made you will not count it blame
That we commend your spirit to His care.

Winifred M. Letts

I've Got a Dog

I'VE got a dog. The other boys
Have quantities of tools and toys,
And heaps of things that I ain't seen
(Ain't saw, I mean).
They've oars and clubs and golfin' sticks,—
I know a feller that has six,
And gee! you ought to see him drive!
But I've
Got a dog!

I've got a dog. His name is Pete.
The other children on our street
Have lots of things that I ain't got
(I mean, have not).
I know a boy that's got a gun.
I don't see why they have such fun
Playing with things that ain't alive;
But I've
Got a dog!

I've got a dog, and so, you see,
The boys all want to play with me;
They think he's such a cunnin' brute
(I mean, so cute).
That's why they leave their toys and games,
And run to us, and shout our names,
Whenever me and Pete arrive;
For I've
Got a dog!

Ethel M. Kelley

A Faithful Dog

MY merry-hearted comrade on a day
Gave over all his mirth, and went away
Upon the darksome journey I must face
Sometime as well. Each hour I miss his grace,
His meek obedience and his constancy.
Never again will he look up to me
With loyal eyes, nor leap for my caress
As one who wished not to be masterless;
And never shall I hear his pleading bark
Outside the door when all the ways grow dark,
Bidding the house-folk gather close inside
It seems a cruel thing, since he has died,
To make his memory small, or deem it sin
To reckon such a mate as less than kin.

O faithful follower, O gentle friend,
If thou art missing at the journey's end—
Whate'er of joy or solace there I find
Unshared by thee I left so far behind,
The gladness will be mixed with tears, I trow—
My little crony of the long ago!
For how could Heaven be home-like, with the door
Fast-locked against a loved one evermore?

Richard Burton

"Tim" an Irish Terrier

IT'S wonderful dogs they're breeding now:
Small as a flea or large as a cow,
But my old lad Tim he'll never be bet
By any dog that ever he met.
"Come on," says he, "for I'm not kilt yet."

No matter the size of the dog he'll meet,
Tim trails his coat the length of the street.
D'ye mind his scars an' his ragged ear,
The like of a Dublin Fusilier?
He's a massacree dog that knows no fear.

But he'd stick to me till his latest breath;
An' he'd go with me to the gates of death.
He'd wait for a thousand years, maybe,
Scratching the door an' whining for me
If myself were inside in Purgatory.

So I laugh when I hear them make it plain
That dogs and men never meet again.
For all their talk who'd listen to thim
With the soul in the shining eyes of him?
Would God be wasting a dog like Tim?

Winifred M. Letts

To Any Little Brown Dog

THIS small and furry cranium,
Round as an apple in my hand,
What does it hold? An ounce of brains,
A world of mild philosophy.
Oh, little dog! Eyes sage and bland
That follow me about the room,
Crafty for love, but never gain—
Unless the gain is love of me—
Which of us humans has the wit:
To serve, and make such sport of it.

Leonora Speyer

To an English Setter

CORINTHIAN of dogs, how word the grace
That guides your movements? How portray your face,—
The meditation of your eyes, your poise
Of royal head? Such were great Landseer's joys
Who in your woodland splendor lithe and frank
Found your race Greek from chest to slender flank
And gave you poetry for heritage.
Would that in his—your high breed's classic age—
He could have seen and caught the charm again
Of sunlight rippling through your silken mane
Of white and gold! Would he could see you now
Cleaving the goldenrod like Dian's plough
And quick with autumn's half barbaric mood
Scattering the sumac leaves in showers of blood!
Or as, in carved Olympiad runners' pose,
With ears peaked high you watch the cloud of crows
Flock with sarcastic echoes o'er the plain,
Knowing pursuit and challenge are in vain.

Thomas Walsh

Our Airedale "On Guard"

HIS master, grip in hand, stood at the gate.
"Good by, old chap," he said, patting his head,
"It won't be long to wait;
"Take good care of Her while I am gone."
The gate-latch clicked and we were left alone.

All through that week he kept close at my side;
His ever-watchful eyes, whene'er I waked at night,
Were open wide.
I'm sure he scarcely slept—always "on guard,"
Ready to give his life, if need were,
For his ward.

Then came that happy night—his master home!
A few ecstatic wiggles of delight
And joyful squirms,
Then into his cushioned chair he slowly crept,
Heaved a deep-drawn sigh of duty done,—
And slept!

Rose G. Eliot Smith

The Dog

"THE dog!" a friend explained; and hearing there
The swift contempt expressed,
I wondered how an angel might compare
The planet's worst and best.

Fidelity and love we value most:
Of all the hearts that live,
What one fidelity like his can boast,
Or such affection give?

Love absolute, undoubting and untaught!
How grudging seems our own,
Compared to his, the changeless and unbought,
From so scant nurture grown—

The careless word, the cold hand's hurried touch,
The cast-off bone or crust!
What squandering of all we value much
Shall buy that perfect trust?

O true, deep eyes! O heart that so delights
To be the grateful slave!
O poor, dumb lips that kiss the hand that smites,
And mourn above its grave!

If truer souls be known, proclaim who can!
Nor would my tongue deny,
If heavenly tongue should praise a blameless man,
"The dog!" it well could cry.

George Sterling

At the Dog Show

LONG and gray and gaunt he lies.
A Lincoln among dogs; his eyes
Deep and clear of sight, appraise
The meaningless and shuffling ways
Of human folk that stop to stare.
One witless woman seeing there
How tired, how contemptuous
He is of all the smell and fuss
Asks him, "Poor fellow, are you sick?"

Yea, sick, and weary to the quick
Of heat and noise from dawn to dark.
He will not even stoop to bark
His protest, like the lesser bred.
Would he might know, one gazer read
The wistful longing in his face,
The thirst for wind and open space
And stretch of limbs to him begrudged.

There came a little, dapper, fat,
And bustling man, with cane and spat
And pearl-gray vest and derby hat—
Such were the judger and the judged!

Christopher Morley

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Little Lost Pup

HE was lost!—not a shade of doubt of that;
For he never barked at a slinking cat,
But stood in the square where the wind blew raw,
With a drooping ear and a trembling paw
And a mournful look in his pleading eye
And a plaintive sniff at the passer-by
That begged as plain as a tongue could sue,
"O Mister! please may I follow you?"
A lorn, wee waif of a tawny brown
Adrift in the roar of a heedless town—
Ah, the saddest of sights in a world of sin
Is a little lost pup with his tail tucked in!

Well, he won my heart (for I set great store
On my own red Bute—who is here no more)
So I whistled clear, and he trotted up,
And who so glad as that small lost pup!
Now he shares my board, and he owns my bed,
And he fairly shouts when he hears my tread;
Then, if things go wrong, as they sometimes do,
And the world is cold and I'm feeling blue,
He asserts his right to assuage my woes
With a warm, red tongue and a nice, cold nose
And a silky head on my arm or knee
And a paw as soft as a paw can be.

When we rove the woods for a league about
He's as full of pranks as a school let out;
For he romps and frisks like a three-months' colt,
And he runs me down like a thunder-bolt.
Oh, the blithest of sights in the world so fair
Is a gay little pup with his tail in the air!

Arthur Guiterman

To a Dog

I

IF there is no God for thee
Then there is no God for me.

If He sees not when you share
With the poor your frugal fare;

Does not see you at a grave,
Every instinct bred to save,

As if you were the only one
Believing in a resurrection,

When you wait, as lovers do,
Watching till your friend comes true;

Does not reverence when you take
Angry words for love's sweet sake;

If His eye does not approve
All your faith and pain and love;

If the heart of justice fail
And is for you of no avail;

If there is no Heaven for thee
Then there is no Heaven for me.

II

If the Lord they tell us of
Died for men yet loves not love;

If from out His Paradise
He shuts the innocent and wise,

The gay, obedient, simple, good,
The docile ones, of friendly mood,

Those who die to save a friend
Heavenly faithful to the end;

If there is no cross for thee
Then there is no cross for me.

III

If its boughs reach not so high
That they bowed star and sky,

If its roots are not so sound
That they cleave the heavy ground,

If it thrills not through all Nature
Plunged through every living creature,

If its leaves do not enmesh
Every bit of groaning flesh,

If it strike not its mighty spur
Through fang and claw and tooth and fur,

Piercing tree and earth and stone,
Then indeed I stand alone.

Nothing less than this can save
Me, from out my fleshly grave,

Me, in whom such jungles are
Where beasts go out to war.

If there is no God for thee
Then there is no God for me.

Anna Hempstead Branch

Lone Dog

I'M a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.

I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat,
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff, and kick, and hate.

Not for me the other dogs, running by my side.
Some have run a short while, but none of them would bide.
O mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and the hunger of the quest.

Irene R. McLeod

Sir Walter's Friend

"YOUR invitation, Sir, to dine
With you to-night I must decline
Because to-day I lost a friend—
A friend long known and loved." Thus penned
The good Sir Walter, aptly named
The Wizard of the North, and famed
For truest, gentlest heart, among
The homes that love the English tongue.
Great heart, that felt the soul of things
In all its high imaginings,
And showed, 'mid vexing stress and strife
Of worldly cares, a hero's life!

An humble friend it was he loved,
And oft together they had roved
The heather hills and sweet brae-side,
Or braved the rushing river's tide;
And many a frosty winter night
Sat musing by the warm firelight—
A faithful friend, whom chance and change
Of fleeting years could ne'er estrange.
For he who once has gained the love
And friendship of a dog shall prove
Thro' joy and sorrow to the end
The deep devotion of a friend.

What is it? More than instinct fine,
This something man cannot divine,
Which speaks from eyes where lips are mute,
Which makes the creature we name brute
The noblest pattern we may see
Of loving, lasting loyalty.
We dare not call it mind or soul,

We know not what or where its goal,
But aye we know its little span
Of life spells large: Friendship to man.
No wonder Scott, in grief, should say,
"I lost a much-loved friend to-day!"

Zitella Cocke

We Meet at Morn

STILL half in dream, upon the stair I hear
A patter coming nearer, and more near,
And then upon my chamber door
A gentle tapping—
For dogs, though proud, are poor,
And if a tail will do to give command,
Why use a hand?
And after that a cry, half sneeze, half yapping,
And next a scuffle on the passage floor,
And then I know the creature lies to wait
Until the noiseless maid will lift the latch,
And like a spring
That gains its power by being tightly stayed,
The impatient thing
Into the room
Its whole glad heart doth fling.
And ere the gloom
Melts into light, and window blinds are rolled,
I hear a bounce upon the bed,
I feel a creeping toward me—a soft head,
And on my face
A tender nose, and cold—
That is the way, you know, that dogs embrace—
And on my hand, like sun-warmed rose-leaves flung,
The least faint flicker of the warmest tongue—
And so my dog and I have met and sworn
Fresh love and fealty for another morn.

Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley

Collie Kelso

An Epitaph

THE rhythmic beating of his tail,
As though two hearts took turn about,
One thump inside, and then one out,—
Like all things earthly, it must fail.
Pacific gesture, made to span
The gap 'twixt animal and man,
Death stopt it. One last waggle; so
Went Kelso where the good dogs go.

John Vance Cheney

To My Terrier "Rex"

EACH night before I sleep,
Out of doors I steal,
Upon the shore to watch
The constellations wheel—
My terrier at heel—

To learn the lore of night,
To mark with kindled eye
How Taurus plunges up
And Pegasus sweeps by,
Wide-winged upon the sky!

Gravely I question him,
My friend with curly coat:
"What think you of the stars
That in the ether float—
The Lion and the Goat,

"The Peacock and the Swan,
The Little Dog, the Great?
Think you their light shall fail
At any early date?"
He yawns to say it's late!

Vainly I point him plain
The Dog-Star following
His Master in the hunt
Across the skies of spring—
The Sword-Belt glittering.

My heedless terrier
Cares not a fig for skies,
But stares at me with love's

Unchallenging surmise—
Twin stars within his eyes!

And leaps beneath my touch
As home from shore we steal,
While hunting overhead
I watch Orion wheel,
With Sirius at heel!

Agnes Kendrick Gray

You're a Dog

AT the kennel where they bred you they were raising fancy pets,
Yellow didn't matter, so the blood was blue.
But the Red Gods mixed a medicine that cancelled all their bets—
Make your tail say "Thanks": they've made a dog of you.

You have heard the wolf-pack howling and have barked a full defiance;
You have chased the moose and routed out the deer;
You have worked and played and lived with man in honorable alliance,
You have shared his tent and camp-fire as his peer.

When you might have copped the ribbon you have worn the harness-collar,
Pulling thrice your weight through bush and slush and bog.
Sure, you might have been a "Champion," without value save the dollar,
But the Red Gods made you priceless—*You're a dog!*

C. L. Gilman

"Vigi"

WISEST of dogs was Vigi, a tawny-coated hound
That King Olaf, warring over green hills of Ireland, found;
His merry Norse were driving away a mighty herd
For feasts upon the dragon-ships, when an isleman dared a word:

"From all those stolen hundreds, well might ye spare my score."
"Aye, take them," quoth the gamesome king, "but not a heifer more.
Choose out thine own, nor hinder us; yet choose without a slip."
The isleman laughed and whistled, his finger at his lip.

Oh, swift the bright-eyed Vigi went darting through the herd
And singled out his master's neat with a nose that never erred,
And drave the star-marked twenty forth, to the wonder of the king,
Who bought the hound right honestly, at the price of a broad gold ring.

If the herd-dog dreamed of an Irish voice and of cattle on the hill,
He told it not to Olaf the King, whose will was Vigi's will,
But followed him far in faithful love and bravely helped him win
His famous fight with Thorir Hart and Raud, the wizard Finn.

Above the clamor and the clang shrill sounded Vigi's bark
And when the groaning ship of Raud drew seaward to the dark,
And Thorir Hart leapt to the land, bidding his rowers live
Who could, Olaf and Vigi strained hard on the fugitive.

'T was Vigi caught the runner's heel and stayed the wind-swift flight
Till Olaf's well-hurled spear had changed the day to endless night
For Thorir Hart, but not before his sword had stung the hound,
Whom the heroes bore on shield to ship, all grieving for his wound.

Now proud of heart was Vigi to be borne to ship on shield,
And many a day thereafter, when the bitter thrust was healed,
Would the dog leap up on the Vikings and coax with his Irish wit
Till 'mid laughter a shield was leveled, and Vigi rode on it.

Katharine Lee Bates

My Dog

I HAVE no dog, but it must be
Somewhere there's one belongs to me—
A little chap with wagging tail,
And dark brown eyes that never quail,
But look you through, and through, and through
With love unspeakable, but true.

Somewhere it must be, I opine,
There is a little dog of mine
With cold black nose that sniffs around
In search of what things may be found
In pocket, or some nook hard by
Where I have hid them from his eye.

Somewhere my doggie pulls and tugs
The fringes of rebellious rugs,
Or with the mischief of the pup
Chews all my shoes and slippers up,
And when he's done it to the core
With eyes all eager pleads for more.

Somewhere upon his hinder legs
My little doggie sits and begs,
And in a wistful minor tone
Pleads for the pleasures of the bone—
I pray it be his owner's whim
To yield, and grant the same to him.

Somewhere a little dog doth wait,
It may be by some garden gate,
With eyes alert and tail attent—
You know the kind of tail that's meant—
With stores of yelps of glad delight
To bid me welcome home at night.

Somewhere a little dog is seen,
His nose two shaggy paws between,
Flat on his stomach, one eye shut
Held fast in dreamy slumber, but
The other open, ready for
His master coming through the door.

John Kendrick Bangs

Why the Dog's Nose Is Cold

"WHAT makes the dog's nose always cold?"
I'll try to tell you, Curls-of-gold,
If you will sit upon my knee
And very good and quiet be.

Well, years and years and years ago—
How many I don't really know—
There came a rain on sea and shore;
Its like was never seen before
Or since. It fell unceasing down
Till all the world began to drown.

But just before it down did pour,
An old, old man—his name was Noah—
Built him an ark, that he might save
His family from a watery grave;
And in it also he designed
To shelter two of every kind
Of beast. Well, dear, when it was done,
And heavy clouds obscured the sun,
The Noah folks to it quickly ran,
And then the animals began
To gravely march along in pairs.

The leopards, tigers, wolves and bears,
The deer, the hippopotamuses,
The rabbits, squirrels, elks, walruses,
The camels, goats, and cats, and donkeys,
The tall giraffes, the beavers, monkeys,
The rats, the big rhinoceroses,
The dromedaries and the horses,

The sheep, the mice, the kangaroos,
Hyenas, elephants, koodoos,
And many more—'t would take all day,
My dear, the very names to say—
And at the very, very end
Of the procession, by his friend
And master, faithful dog was seen.

The lifelong time he'd helping been
To drive the crowd of creatures in;
And now, with loud, exultant bark,
He gaily sprang aboard the ark.

Alas! So crowded was the space
He could not in it find a place;
So, patiently, he turned about,—
Stood half-way in, and half-way out,
And those extremely heavy showers
Descended through nine hundred hours
And more; and, darling, at their close
Most frozen was his honest nose;
And never could it lose again
The dampness of that dreadful rain.
And that is what, my Curls-of-gold,
Made all the doggies' noses cold.

Margaret Eytinge

The Best Dog

YES, I went to see the bow-wows, and I looked at every one,
Proud dogs of every breed and strain that's underneath the sun;
But not one could compare with—you may hear it with surprise—
A little dog I know that never took a prize.

Not that they would have skipped him when they gave the ribbons out,
Had there been a class to fit him—though his lineage is in doubt.
No judge of dogs could e'er resist the honest, faithful eyes
Of that plain little yellow dog that never took a prize.

Suppose he wasn't trained to hunt, and never killed a rat,
And isn't much on tricks or looks or birth—well, what of that?
That might be said of lots of *folks* whom men call great and wise,
As well as of that yellow dog that never took a prize.

It isn't what a dog can do, or what a dog may be,
That hits a man; it's simply this—does he believe in me?
And by that test I know there's not the compeer 'neath the skies
Of that plain little yellow dog that never took a prize.

Oh, he's the finest little pup that ever wagged a tail,
And followed man with equal joy to Congress or to jail.
I'm going to start a special show—'t will beat the world for size—
For faithful little yellow dogs, and each shall have a prize.

Unknown

My Dog

TO-DAY Hell chuckled at another lie,
That gave no human being any pain,
Except one temporary soul. Nor Cain
Was more heart-heavy when he came to die.

I branded him a cur that by-and-by
Would go the way of mongrels and be slain,
By man nor God regretted; clear and plain
Were the reproaches written in his eye.

He bridled slightly ere he slunk away
An hour ago and perished in a bog,
Saving two children who had gone astray:
Since when the sirens sounding through the fog
Are Gabriel horns that thunder me to pray,
Or to be damned for slandering my dog.

William Griffith

The Turkish Trench Dog

NIGHT held me as I crawled and scrambled near
The Turkish lines. Above, the mocking stars
Silvered the curving parapet, and clear
Cloud-latticed beams o'erflecked the land with bars;
I, crouching, lay between
Tense-listening armies, peering through the night,
Twin giants bound by tentacles unseen.
Here in dim-shadowed light
I saw him, as a sudden movement turned
His eyes toward me, glowing eyes that burned
A moment ere his snuffling muzzle found
My trail; and then as serpents mesmerize
He chained me with those unrelenting eyes,
That muscle-sliding rhythm, knit and bound
In spare-limbed symmetry, those perfect jaws
And soft-approaching pitter-patter paws.
Nearer and nearer like a wolf he crept—
That moment had my swift revolver leapt—
But terror seized me, terror born of shame
Brought flooding revelation. For he came
As one who offers comradeship deserved,
An open ally of the human race,
And sniffing at my prostrate form unnerved
He licked my face!

Geoffrey Dearmer

To an Irish Terrier

ROUGH is your coat and sharp the bite and bark
Your giant jaws can give in an alarm;
Swift as you are to rush into the fight,
Your heart is swifter to be soft and warm.

There are about you sensitive soft ways
As of the ancient heroes of the Gaęl;
Your eye is melting kind or all ablaze;
You have been never known to blench or quail.

Just as the tenderness some gruff old friend
Will stealthily show us, you are dear indeed;
Faithful and rough and Irish to the end
In answer to our call and every deed.

Thomas Walsh

For a Little Brown Dog

FOR a Little Brown Dog, who "sees" me down
The hill to the car when I go to town,
And carries my bag with an air of pride,
As he trots sedately by my side,
And waits to see that I'm on all right,
And watches the car till it's out of sight—
I thank thee.

For the way he tears down the hill to meet
That car at night on his mad little feet—
The car that will bring me, he knows, from town—
And the joyous greeting, as I step down,
A greeting the passengers hear and see,
Every one of them envying me,
I thank thee.

For the great true heart that is in his eyes,
Tender, and patient, and brave, and wise,
That makes him know when I'm sick, or sad,
And, knowing, love me the more—dear lad—
With a love unquestioning, high and fine—
For all of that Little Brown Dog of mine,
—I thank thee.

Unknown

To "Sigurd"

NOT one blithe leap of welcome? Can you lie
Under this woodland mold,
More still
Than broken daffodil,
When I,
Home from too long a roving,
Come up the silent hill?
Dear, wistful eyes,
White ruff and windy gold
Of collie coat so oft caressed,
Not one quick thrill
In snowy breast,
One spring of jubilant surprise,
One ecstasy of loving?

Are all our frolics ended? Never more
Those royal romps of old,
When one,
Playfellow of the sun,
Would pour
Adventures and romances
Into a morning run;
Off and away,
A flying glint of gold,
Startling to wing a husky choir
Of crows whose dun
Shadows would tire
Even that wild speed? Unscared to-day
They hold their weird seances.

Ever you dreamed, legs twitching, you would catch
A crow, O leaper bold,
Next time,—

Or chase to branch sublime
That batch
Of squirrels daring capture
In saucy pantomine;
Till one spring dawn,
Resting amid the gold
Of crocuses, Death stole on you
From that far clime
Where dreams come true,
And left upon the starry lawn
Your form without your rapture.

And was Death's whistle then so wondrous sweet
Across the glimmering wold
That you
Would trustfully pursue
Strange feet?
When I was gone, each morrow
You sought our old haunts through,
Slower to play,
Drooping in faded gold.
Now it is mine to grieve and miss
My comrade true,
Who used to kiss
With eager tongue such tears away,
Coaxing a smile from sorrow.

I know not what life is, nor what is death,
Nor how vast Heaven may hold
All this
Earth-beauty and earth-bliss.
Christ saith
That not a sparrow falleth
—O songs of sparrow faith!—
But God is there.

May not a leap of gold
Yet greet me on some gladder hill,
A shining wraith,
Rejoicing still,
As in those hours we found so fair,
To follow where love calleth?

Katharine Lee Bates

To My Setter "Scout"

YOU are a tried and loyal friend;
The end
Of life will find you leal, unweary
Of tested bonds that naught can rend,
And e'en if years be sad and dreary
Our plighted friendship will extend.

A truer friend man never had;
'Tis sad
That 'mongst all earthly friends the fewest
Unfaithful ones should thus be clad
In canine lowliness; yet truest
They, be their treatment good or bad.

Within your eyes methinks I find
A kind
And thoughtful look of speechless feeling
That mem'ry's loosened cords unbind,
And let the dreamy past come stealing
Through your dumb, reflective mind.

Scout, my trusty friend, can it be
You see
Again, in retrospective dreaming,
The run, the woodland and the lea,
With past autumnal sunshine streaming
O'er every frost-dyed field and tree?

Or do you see now once again
The glen
And fern, the highland and the thistle,
And do you still remember when

We heard the bright-eyed woodcock whistle
Down by the rippling shrub-edged fen?

I see you turn a listening ear
To hear
The quail upon the flower-pied heather;
But, doggie, wait till uplands sere
And then the autumn's waning weather
Will bring the sport we hold so dear.

Then we will hunt the loamy swale
And trail
The snipe, their cunning wiles o'ercoming;
And oft will flush the bevied quail,
And hear the partridge slowly drumming
Dull echoes in the leaf-strewn dale.

When wooded hills with crimson light
Are bright
We'll stroll where trees and vines are growing;
And see birds warp their southern flight
At sundown, and when the Day King's throwing
Sly kisses to the Queen of Night.

When shadows fall in life's fair dell,
And knell
Of death comes with the autumn's even
To separate us, who can tell
But that, within the realm of Heaven,
We both together there will dwell?

Frank H. Seldon

The Vagabonds

WE are two travellers, Roger and I.
Roger's my dog.—Come here, you scamp!
Jump for the gentleman,—mind your eye!
Over the table,—look out for the lamp!
The rogue is growing a little old;
Five years we've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept outdoors when nights were cold,
And ate and drank—and starved—together.

We've learned what comfort is, I tell you!
A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow!
The paw he holds up there's been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle
(This outdoors business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank ye, Sir,—I never drink;
Roger and I are exceedingly moral,—
Aren't we, Roger?—See him wink!—
Well, something hot then,—we won't quarrel.
He's thirsty, too,—see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk!
He understands every word that's said,—
And he knows good milk from water-and-chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,
I've been so badly given to grog,
I wonder I've not lost the respect
(Here's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.
But he sticks by, through thick and thin;
And that old coat with its empty pockets,

And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There isn't another creature living
Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,
To such a miserable, thankless master!
No, Sir!—See him wag his tail and grin!
By George! it makes my old eyes water!
That is, there's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow. But—no matter!

We'll have some music, if you're willing,
And Roger (hem! what a plague a cough is, Sir!)
Shall march a little.—Start, you villain!
Paws up! Eyes front! Salute your officer!
'Bout face! Attention! Take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see!) Now hold your
Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle,
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the rebel shakes
When he stands up to hear his sentence.
Now tell us how many drams it takes
To honor a jolly new acquaintance.
Five yelps,—that's five; he's mighty knowing!
The night's before us, fill the glasses!—
Quick, Sir! I'm ill,—my brain is going!—
Some brandy,—thank you,—there!—it passes!

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
This pain; then Roger and I will start.
I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden,
Aching thing in place of a heart?
He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,

No doubt remembering things that were,—
A virtuous kennel, with plenty of food,
And himself a sober, respectable cur.

I'm better now; that glass was warming.—
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street.—
Not a very gay life to lead, you think?
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink:—
The sooner, the better for Roger and me!

J. T. Trowbridge

His Name Was Bob

A LITTLE mongrel dog—he couldn't boast
The smallest trace of blooded pedigree—
All legs and feet, a no'count tail, that thumped
Its joyous greeting at the sight of me—

But loving! There's no dictionary prints
The word which, to my thinking, can express
That look that shone in his brown eyes of trust,
Solicitude and wistful tenderness!

O' nights his tawny head against my knee,
We'd sit together—yesterday he died—
And every one who loves a dog will know
Just why, a lonely-hearted man—I cried!

M. V. Caruthers

"Jock," a Terrier

THAT he was small, and fiery, and sweet—
How well we know who had him—and have not!
As flawless gentleman as one would meet
Outside a book, or knightly Camelot.
Too fleet his days for what he found to do;
Sharp war to wage on strange folk loitering by;
The care of all the house, his mistress, too;
Long wayfarings beneath the country sky.
And now the empty year remembers him;
Mixed with all true and simple things is he;—
And somehow with us still, though he is dead;—
With stars, and windy paths, and season's whim;
With chimney chronicle and village glee;
And all the tears that ever will be shed.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog

NEAR this spot
Are deposited the Remains of one
Who possessed Beauty without Vanity,
Strength without Insolence,
Courage without Ferocity,
And all the Virtues of Man without His Vices.
This Praise, which would be unmeaning Flattery
If inscribed over human ashes,
Is but a just tribute to the memory of
Boatswain, a Dog,
Who was born at Newfoundland, May, 1803,
And died at Newstead Abbey, Nov. 18, 1808.

Lord Byron

Man's Burden Bearers

O jingling spur and rattling rein, brown earth and bending sky,
We turn to you to brim again the cup of life run dry;
Take toll of all the fancied gain that hard-spent striving brings,
But set our days in measure with the song the saddle sings.

SHARLOT M. HALL

The Kentucky Thoroughbred

I LOVE the hoss from hoof to head,
From head to hoof and tail to mane;
I love the hoss, as I have said,
From head to hoof and back again.

I love my God the first of all,
Then Him that perished on the Cross;
And next my wife, and then I fall
Down on my knees and love the hoss.

James Whitcomb Riley

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Polo Ponies

HAS Pegasus, then, visited the earth,
Borne on great pinions lyrical with thunder,
And these his foals—this breed of racing wonder,
Fearless and free, and sensible of worth?
With flash of eye and silver gleam of girth
They charge, now neck to neck, now wheeled asunder,
With shining sides, small feet that scorn to blunder,
Dark nostrils trembling in their pride of birth.

Sired from the skies, they eddy down the plain,
Chestnut and black and the fast-flying dun,
And swift and strong they crowd, and tense and fain,
Eager as fire though the last goal is won,
These wilding creatures gentled to the rein,
These little brothers of the wind and sun.

Eleanor Baldwin

A Tartar Horse

HIS hoofs kicked up the saffron dust
From Ispahan to Tartary,
And golden bits as red as rust
Could never bring him to his knee.

By bleaching desert paths where once
The bearded Khan in splendor rode,
He hears the whinny of response
From phantom steeds that spurned the goad.

And racing with the racing wind,
Through careous rock across the plain
He feels the ghostly whips behind
And yellow fingers in his mane.

When stopping short he lifts his head
And, quivering-nostrilled, shrilly cries,
He turns upon a world that's dead
The burning cities in his eyes.

Herbert Gorman

Riding Song

LET us ride together,—
Blowing mane and hair,
Careless of the weather,
Miles ahead of Care,
Ring of hoof and snaffle,
Swing of waist and hip,
Trotting down the twisted road
With the world let slip.

Let us laugh together,—
Merry as of old,
To the creak of leather
And the morning cold.
Break into a canter;
Shout to bank and tree;
Rocking down the waking trail,
Steady hand and knee.

Take the life of cities!
Here's the life for me.
'T were a thousand pities
Not to gallop free.
So we'll ride together.
Comrade, you and I,
Careless of the weather,
Letting Care go by.

Unknown

The Ass

SINCE the dawn
With careful tread
I have gone
Where Joseph led
Up the white and dusty road
With my precious load.

Now the starred
Blue night grows dim.
It were hard
To follow him
Through the dark with weary feet
Were her voice less sweet.

The caressing
Of her hand
Makes a blessing
Of command:
"Hasten then, thou patient one,
For my little Son."

Joseph's face
Is drawn and gray,
Slow his pace
And blind the way—
At the Inn they gave no heed
To my Lady's need.

It is I
Who go before,
Gently try
The stable door—
"Lowly cattle, lowly kin,
Welcome Mary in!"

Eleanor Baldwin

Horses

THOSE lumbering horses in the steady plough,
On the bare field—I wonder why, just now,
They seemed so terrible, so wild and strange,
Like magic power on the stony grange.

Perhaps some childish hour has come again,
When I watched fearful, through the blackening rain,
Their hoofs like pistons in an ancient mill
Move up and down, yet seem as standing still.

Their conquering hoofs which trod the stubble down
Were ritual which turned the field to brown,
And their great hulks were seraphim of gold;
Or mute ecstatic monsters on the mould.

And oh, the rapture when, one furrow done,
They marched broad-breasted to the sinking sun!
The light flowed off their bossy sides in flakes;
The furrows rolled behind like struggling snakes.

But when at dusk with steaming nostrils home
They came, they seemed gigantic in the gloam,
And warm and glowing with mysterious fire,
Which lit their smouldering bodies in the mire.

Their eyes as brilliant and as wide as night
Gleamed with a cruel apocalyptic sight.
Their manes the leaping ire of the wind
Lifted with rage invisible and blind.

Ah now it fades! it fades! and I must pine
Again for that dread country crystalline,
Where the blank field and the still-standing tree
Were bright and fearful presences to me.

Edwin Muir

The Horses

WHAT was our share in the sinning,
That we must share the doom?
Sweet was our life's beginning
In the spicy meadow-bloom,
With children's hands to pet us
And kindly tones to call.
To-day the red spurs fret us
Against the bayonet wall.

What had we done, our masters,
That you sold us into Hell?
Our terrors and disasters
Have filled your pockets well.
You feast on our starvation;
Your laughter is our groan.
Have horses then no nation,
No country of their own?

What are we, we your horses,
So loyal where we serve,
Fashioned of noble forces
All sensitive with nerve?
Torn, agonized, we wallow
On the blood-bemired sod;
And still the shiploads follow.
Have horses then no God?

Katharine Lee Bates

The Burthen of the Ass

ON Christmas night at Bethlehem
When Shepherds came, I watched with them
The Mother and the Child,
Who, warned from Herod's wrath to flee,
Were into Egypt borne by me,
Beyond the desert wild.

And back again, at Herod's death,
I brought them home to Nazareth;
And when unto His own,
With loud Hosannas to His Name
As King the Son of David came,
My shoulders were His throne.

John B. Tabb

I Am the Mule

I AM the mule, from ears which catch the gale
To that unresting terminus, my tail;
From downcast head and eye upon the soil,
Where burdens chain me to the post of toil,
To my one quick defense, the nimble heel,
Which lashing tyrants sometimes justly feel.
I climb the mountains where the eagles rule
And tramp the dingy mine-path—I, the mule.

I am the mule—the butt of countless jokes—
But since time was my neck has known the yokes
Of labor merciless, of crushing tasks which tell
Of human cruelty which breeds a human hell.
But as for me, without a sigh or tear,
Heat, cold or storm, I get my hell right here—
On city street, in miry, rustic pool;
My prayer a bray for pity on the mule.

I am the mule—where snows eternal cling,
Or where the tropics flaunt perpetual Spring;
On trains which hide behind the mask of night,
Where cotton bales are stacked and blackskins fight,
Where bleak Alaska binds a pack of dust
Upon the spine—the spoils of human lust—
Or where for heartless Cubans I'm the tool
To pull the ponderous cane-carts—I, the mule.

I am the mule, and when men madly fly
To belching guns and paint a war-red sky,
And cities tumble and Armadas sink,
I drag the cannons while the cowards slink.

And when are ended all the blood-wet days
Who ever hears for me a note of praise—
I who have triumphs fashioned in the school
Of world events—your humble slave—the mule?

Will Chamberlain

The Dromedary

IN dreams I see the Dromedary still,
As once in a gay park I saw him stand:
A thousand eyes in vulgar wonder scanned
His humps and hairy neck, and gazed their fill
At his lank shanks and mocked with laughter shrill.
He never moved: and if his Eastern land
Flashed on his eye with stretches of hot sand,
It wrung no mute appeal from his proud will.

He blinked upon the rabble lazily;
And still some trace of majesty forlorn
And a coarse grace remained: his head was high,
Though his gaunt flanks with a great mange were worn:
There was not any yearning in his eye,
But on his lips and nostril infinite scorn.

A. Y. Campbell

On the Passing of the Last Fire Horse from Manhattan Island

I REMEMBER the cleared streets, the strange suspense
As if a thunder-storm were under way;
Magnificently furious, hurrying thence
The fire-eyed horses racing to the fray;
Out of old Homer where the heroes are,
Beating upon the whirlwind thunderous hoofs,
Wild horses and plumed Ajax in his car:
Oh, in those days we still possest the proofs
Men battled shouting by the gates of Troy,
With shields of triple brass and spears of flame.
With what distended nostrils, what fierce joy,
What ring on stone and steel those horses came!
Like horses of gods that whirl to the dawn's burning,
They came, and they are gone, and unreturning.

Kenneth Slade Alling

Burro

BELOVED vagrant of the ample ear;
Philosopher; gray hobo of the dunes:
Delight of children; thistle-chewing seer,
From Lebanon and eld, how many moons?

Muse of Mañana; sturdy foe of haste,
Complacent in your poise, your attitude;
A statue of dejection, shaggy-faced,
Or plodding with your pack of cedar wood;

Pausing to turn your head, with motion stiff,
As though you half-imagined something wrong;
Wondering if you were there, complete, or if
The rest of you forgot to come along.

What melancholy thoughts bestir your breast,
When, like an ancient pump, you lift a tone,
Lose it and lift another, with a zest
Known to no beast on earth save you alone?

Your melody means something deep, unseen,
A storied memory of some old Romance,
And ears attuned to mysteries, might glean
More from your song than simple assonance.

You sing the Truth, without a touch of guile,
And Truth were sad enough—and yet your guise
Of March-mad melancholy moves a smile,
And thus the world is richer, burro-wise;

Richer, because you are yourself; you please
That subtle sense that loves the ludicrous,
Scorning no lesson. Oh, Demosthenes
Of Andalusia, left to preach to us!

Dogging the sunlight of some empty street
Content with what your indolence may find—
Let the world rock, and you will keep your feet;
Let the world run, and you will stray behind,

Unknown

A Camel Driver

LO, here is one who ranging with Orion
Has trod the paths from Sinai unto Pharz:
Who 'neath the rays of Libra and the Lion
Has marched at midnight with the midnight stars!

Lo, here is one by many a tongue derided,
Yet hale of heart, unhesitant of hand,
Who long and late his camel craft has guided,
A mariner across the desert sand!

Lo, here is one whose ceaseless vows to Allah
At dawn and dusk have mounted up the skies!
Should he not win at last, this swart Abdullah,
Unto a little nook in Paradise?

Clinton Scollard

The Undertaker's Horse

THE eldest son bestrides him,
And the pretty daughter rides him,
And I meet him oft o' mornings on the Course;
And there kindles in my bosom
An emotion chill and gruesome
As I canter past the Undertaker's Horse.

Neither shies he nor is restive,
But a hideously suggestive
Trot, professional and placid, he affects;
And the cadence of his hoof-beats
To my mind this grim reproof beats;—
"Mend your pace, my friend, I'm coming. Who's the next?"

Ah! stud-bred of ill-omen,
I have watched the strongest go—men
Of pitch and might and muscle—at your heels,
Down the plantain-bordered highway,
(Heaven send it ne'er by my way!)
In a lacquered box and jetty upon wheels.

Answer, sombre beast and dreary,
Where is Brown, the young, the cheery,
Smith, the pride of all his friends and half the Force?
You were at that last dread *dak*
We must cover at a walk,
Bring them back to me, O Undertaker's Horse!

With your mane unhogged and flowing,
And your curious way of going,
And that businesslike black crimping of your tail,
E'en with Beauty on your back, Sir,
Pacing as a lady's hack, Sir,
What wonder when I meet you I turn pale?

It may be you wait time, Beast,
Till I write my last bad rhyme, Beast—
Quit the sunlight, cut the rhyming, drop the glass—
Follow after with the others,
Where some dusky heathen smothers
Us with marigolds in lieu of English grass.

Or, perchance, in years to follow,
I shall watch your plump sides hollow,
See Carnifex (gone lame) become a corse—
See old age at last o'erpower you,
And the Station Pack devour you,
I shall chuckle then, O Undertaker's Horse!

But to insult, gibe, and quest, I've
Still the hideously suggestive
Trot that hammers out the unrelenting text,
And I hear it hard behind me
In what place soe'er I find me:—
"Sure to catch you sooner or later. Who's the next?"

Rudyard Kipling

The Early Morning Ride

THE dawn has left a rosy light
Where scintillates the frosty sun,
Your coat is silken, soft and bright,
Oh, gentle horse, my lovely one.

A while we thread through crowded fares—
With careful step and ears erect,
And arching neck, away she bears
To streams, where flying clouds reflect.

There, stretched before a mossy bank,
Its dew of morning still undried;—
I touch my beauty's shining flank,
She lifts her quivering nostril wide,

And, like an arrow in the wind,
Away, away, we flash as one!
While playing, straining muscles bend
Her slender limbs to bear me on.

Dorothea Gilroy

Horse, Dog, and Man

THE horse and the dog had tamed a man and fastened
him to a fence.
Said the horse to the dog: "For the life of me, I don't see
a bit of sense
In letting him have the thumbs that grow at the sides of his
hands. Do you?"
And the dog looked solemn and shook his head, and said:
"I'm a goat if I do!"

The poor man groaned and tried to get loose, and sadly he
begged them, "Stay!
You will rob me of things for which I have use by cutting
my thumbs away!
You will spoil my looks, you will cause me pain; ah, why
would you treat me so?
As I am, God made me, and He knows best! Oh, masters,
pray let me go!"

The dog laughed out, the horse replied, "Oh, the cutting
won't hurt you, see?
We'll have a hot iron to clap right on, as you did in your
docking of me!
God gave you your thumbs and all, but still, the Creator,
you know, may fail
To do the artistic thing, as He did in the furnishing me
with a tail."

So they bound the man and cut off his thumbs, and were
deaf to his pitiful cries,
And they seared the stumps, and they viewed their work
through happy and dazzled eyes.
"How trim he appears," the horse exclaimed, "since his
awkward thumbs are gone!

For the life of me I cannot see why the Lord ever put them on!"

"Still it seems to me," the dog replied, "that there's something else to do;
His ears look rather too long for me, and how do they look to you?"
The man cried out: "Oh, spare my ears! God fashioned them as you see,
And if you apply your knife to them, you'll surely disfigure me."

"But you didn't disfigure me, you know," the dog decisively said,
"When you bound me fast and trimmed my ears down close to the top of my head!"
So they let him moan and they let him groan while they cropped his ears away,
And they praised his looks when they let him up, and proud indeed were they.

But that was years and years ago, in an unenlightened age!
Such things are ended, now, you know; we've reached a higher stage.
The ears and thumbs God gave to man are his to keep and wear,
And the cruel horse and dog look on, and never appear to care.

S. E. Kiser

Boot and Saddle

BOOT, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silver gray,
CHORUS
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—
CHORUS
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
CHORUS
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay.
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?"
CHORUS
"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Robert Browning

The Plaint of the Camel

CANARY-BIRDS feed on sugar and seed,
Parrots have crackers to crunch;
And as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.
But there's never a question
About *my* digestion—
Anything does for me!

Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,
Chickens can roost upon rails;
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,
And oysters can slumber in pails.
But no one supposes
A poor Camel dozes—
Any place does for me!

Lambs are enclosed where it's never exposed,
Coops are constructed for hens;
Kittens are treated to houses well heated,
And pigs are protected by pens.
But a Camel comes handy
Wherever it's sandy—
Anywhere does for me!

People would laugh if you rode a giraffe,
Or mounted the back of an ox;
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit,
Or try to bestraddle a fox.
But as for a Camel, he's
Ridden by families—
Any load does for me!

A snake is as round as a hole in the ground,
And weasels are wavy and sleek;

And no alligator could ever be straighter
Than lizards that live in a creek,
But a Camel's all lumpy
And bumpy and humpy—
Any shape does for me!

Charles Edward Carryl

The Old Plough-Horse

WORN-OUT and useless, lone, he stands and dreams,
Day after day, the long sweet summer through:
The last turf-ridge upturned, what is to do
Save watch the crow-hordes, or a hawk that screams
High o'er his master's dooryard, till it seems
The world was made a place for dreaming in?
Around him, daisy-wheels ecstatic spin,
And cattle splash, knee-deep, through cooling streams;
But he, inert, thought-wrapt, oblivious, drifts,
Dream-drawn, a-drowse, towards other fields than these,
Where first he felt the Spring's quick kiss, and seas
Of green about him swam. . . . His bent head lifts . . .
Like some sweet message caught from far-off lands,
He hears his mother whinny, where he stands!

Mahlon Leonard Fisher

The Arab's Farewell to His Steed

MY beautiful, my beautiful, that standest meekly by,
With thy proudly arched and glossy neck, and dark and fiery eye!
Fret not to roam the desert now with all thy wingèd speed,
I may not mount on thee again—thou'rt sold, my Arab steed!

Fret not with that impatient hoof—snuff not the breezy wind;
The farther that thou fliest now, so far am I behind!
The stranger hath my bridle-rein, thy master hath his gold—
Fleet-limbed and beautiful, farewell—thou'rt sold, my steed, thou'rt sold!

Farewell! those free, untired limbs full many a mile must roam,
To reach the chill and wintry clime that clouds the stranger's home;
Some other hand, less kind, must now thy corn and bed prepare;
The silk mane that I braided once must be another's care.

The morning sun shall dawn again—but nevermore with thee
Shall I gallop o'er the desert paths where we were wont to be;
Evening shall darken on the earth, and o'er the sandy plain
Some other steed with slower pace shall bear me home again.

Only in sleep shall I behold that dark eye glancing bright—
Only in sleep shall hear again that step so firm and light;

And when I raise my dreaming arms to check or cheer thy speed,
Then must I startling wake to feel thou'rt sold, my Arab steed!

Ah, rudely then, unseen by me, some cruel hand may chide,
Till foam-wreaths lie, like crested waves, along thy panting side,
And the rich blood that's in thee swells in thy indignant pain,
Till careless eyes that on thee gaze may count each starting vein.

Will they ill-use thee? If I thought—but no, it cannot be;
Thou art so swift, yet easy curbed; so gentle, yet so free.
And yet if haply when thou'rt gone this lonely heart should yearn,
Can the hand that casts thee from it now command thee to return?

"Return!" alas, my Arab steed! what will thy master do,
When thou that wast his all of joy hast vanished from his view?
When the dim distance greets mine eyes, and through the gathering tears
Thy bright form for a moment like the false mirage appears?

Slow and unmounted will I roam with wearied foot alone,
Where, with fleet step and joyous bound, thou oft hast borne me on,
And sitting down by the green well, I'll pause, and sadly think,
" 'T was here he bowed his glossy neck when last I saw him drink."

When last I saw thee drink?—Away! the fevered dream is o'er!
I could not live a day and know that we should meet no more;
They tempted me, my beautiful—for hunger's power is strong—
They tempted me, my beautiful—but I have loved too long—

Who said that I had given thee up? Who said that thou wert sold?
'T is false, 't is false, my Arab steed! I fling them back their gold!
Thus—thus I leap upon thy back, and scour the distant plains!
Away! who overtakes us now shall claim thee for his pains.

Caroline Norton

The Donkey

WHEN fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the morn was blood
Then surely I was born:

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things;

The tattered outlaw of the earth
Of ancient crooked will:
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

A Horse's Epitaph

SOFT lies the turf on those who find their rest
Beneath our common mother's ample breast,
Unstained by meanness, avarice, or pride;
They never cheated, and they never lied.
They ne'er intrigued a rival to dispose;
They ran, but never betted on the race;
Content with harmless sport and simple food,
Boundless in faith and love and gratitude;
Happy the man, if there be any such,—
Of whom his epitaph can say as much.

Lord Sherbrooke

Kittens and Cats

Sphinx of my quiet hearth! who deign'st to dwell
Friend of my toil, companion of my ease,
Thine is the lore of Ra and Rameses.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON

An Elegy on Peter

Ætat 12

IN vain the kindly call; in vain
The plate for which you once were fain
At morn and noon and daylight's wane,
O king of mousers!
No more I hear you purr and purr
As in the frolic days that were
What time you rubbed your velvet fur
Against my trousers.

How empty are the places where
You were so frankly debonair,
Nor dreamed a dream of feline care,
A capering kitten;
The sunny haunts where, grown a cat,
You pondered this, considered that,
The cushioned chair, the rug, the mat
By firelight smitten!

Although of few you stood in dread,
How well you knew a friendly tread,
And what upon your back or head
The stroking hand meant!
A passing scent could keenly wake
Your eagerness for chop or steak,
Yet very rarely did you break
The eighth commandment.

Though brief your life, a little span
Of days compared to that of man,
The time allotted to you ran
In smoother meter;

Now with the warm earth o'er your breast,
O wisest of your kind and best,
Forever may you safely rest
In pace, Peter!

Clinton Scollard

Milk for the Cat

WHEN the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;

Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long dim ecstasy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop,
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body, to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

Harold Monro

The Stranger Cat

A LITTLE girl with golden hair
Was rocking in her grandma's chair,
When in there walked a Stranger Cat.
(I'm *sure* there's nothing strange in that.)

It was a Cat with kinky ears
And very aged for its years.
The little girl remarked "O Scat!"
(I *think* there's nothing strange in that.)

But presently with stealthy tread
The Cat, which at her word had fled,
Returned with cane, and boots and hat.
(I *fear* there's something strange in that.)

"Excuse me," and the cat bowed low,
"I hate to trouble you, you know,
But tell me, have you seen a rat?"
(I *know* there's something strange in that.)

The little girl was very shy—
"Well, really I can't say that I
Have seen one lately, Mr. Cat."
(I'm *sure* there's something strange in that.)

"Oh, haven't you?" the Cat replied;
"Thanks, I am deeply gratified.
I really couldn't eat a rat."
(We *all* know what to think of that.)

And then the Cat with kinky ears
And so much wisdom for its years
Retired, with a soft pit-a-pat
(And that was all there was of that.)

N. B. Babcock

To My Cat

HALF loving-kindliness and half disdain,
Thou comest to my call serenely suave,
With humming speech and gracious gestures grave,
In salutation courtly and urbane;
Yet must I humble me thy grace to gain,
For wiles may win thee though no arts enslave,
And nowhere gladly thou abidest save
Where naught disturbs the concord of thy reign.

Sphinx of my quiet hearth! who deign'st to dwell
Friend of my toil, companion of mine ease,
Thine is the lore of Ra and Rameses;
That men forget dost thou remember well,
Beholden still in blinking reveries
With sombre, sea-green gaze inscrutable.

Rosamund Marriott Watson

The Tom-Cat

AT midnight in the alley
Tom-cat comes to wail,
And he chants the hate of a million years
As he swings his snaky tail.

Malevolent, bony, brindled,
Tiger and devil and bard,
His eyes are coals from the middle of hell
And his heart is black and hard.

He twists and crouches and capers
And bares his curved sharp claws,
And he sings to the stars of the jungle nights
Ere cities were, or laws.

Beast from a world primeval,
He and his leaping clan,
When the blotched red moon leers over the roofs,
Give voice to their scorn of man.

He will lie on a rug to-morrow
And lick his silky fur,
And veil the brute in his yellow eyes
And play he's tame, and purr.

But at midnight in the alley
He will crouch again and wail,
And beat the time for his demon's song
With the swing of his demon's tail.

Don Marquis

The Gardener's Cat

THE gardener's cat's called Mignonette,
She hates the cold, she hates the wet,
She sits among the hothouse flowers
And sleeps for hours and hours and hours.

She dreams she is a tiger fierce
With great majestic claws that pierce,
She sits by the hot-water pipes
And dreams about a coat of stripes;

And in her slumbers she will go
And stalk the sullen buffalo,
And when he roars across the brake
She does not wink, she does not wake.

It must be perfectly immense
To dream with such magnificence,
And pass the most inclement day
In this indeed stupendous way.

She dreams of India's sunny clime,
And only wakes at dinner-time,
And even then she does not stir
But waits till milk is brought to her.

How nice to be the gardener's cat,
She troubles not for mouse or rat,
But, when it's coming down in streams,
She sits among the flowers and dreams.

The gardener's cat would be the thing,
Her dreams are so encouraging;

She dreams that she's a tiger, yet
She's just a cat called Mignonette!

. . . . . .

The moral's this, my little man—
Sleep 'neath life's hailstones when you can,
And if you're humble in estate,
Dream splendidly, at any rate!

Patrick R. Chalmers

Cat's Meat

HO, all you cats in all the street;
Look out, it is the hour of meat:

The little barrow is crawling along,
And the meat-boy growling his fleshy song.

Hurry, Ginger! Hurry, White!
Don't delay to court or fight.

Wandering Tabby, vagrant Black,
Yamble from adventure back!

Slip across the shining street,
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Lift your tail and dip your feet;
Find your penny—Meat! Meat!

Where's your mistress; learn to purr:
Pennies emanate from her.

Be to her, for she is Fate,
Perfectly affectionate.

(You, domestic Pinkie-Nose,
Keep inside and warm your toes.)

Flurry, flurry in the street—
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Harold Monro

To a Cat

THERE is no reason I can find
That you should make me feel so small;
I have a fair to middling mind
While you have almost none at all.
No proud position do you fill;
Your features are extremely plain
And yet I wilt beneath your chill
Disdain.

At night I lie back in my chair
From all my work and worry free
And then I see that sneering stare
Which, from the hearth, you fix on me.
I know I should not strive to please
A dull, unprepossessing cat
But I'm distrait and ill at ease
At that.

You have no power to decide
What I have done or left undone,
You're totally unqualified
For criticising any one.
I cannot tell why I should fret
At contumely and scorn from you
A mere abysmal brute, and yet
I do.

Some day when in those half closed eyes
I see that sinister regard,
To your annoyance and surprise
You'll land out yonder in the yard.

For praise or place I little care,
From hope of fame I'm quite exempt,
But listen, cat! I cannot bear
Contempt.

Unknown

Oh, Little Cat with Yellow Eyes

OH, little cat with yellow eyes,
Enthroned upon my garden gate,
Remote, impassive and sedate,
And so unutterably wise.

You seem to watch the world that lies
Behind us—where the shadows wait,
Oh, little cat with yellow eyes,
Enthroned upon my garden gate!

Where visions of the past arise,
Of honoured dust and royal state,
And Pharaohs bowed to call you great.

. . . . . .

Or are you merely spotting flies,
Oh, little cat with yellow eyes?

Helen Vaughan Williams

In Honor of Taffy Topaz

TAFFY, the topaz-coloured cat,
Thinks now of this and now of that,
But chiefly of his meals.
Asparagus, and cream, and fish,
Are objects of his Freudian wish;
What you don't give, he steals.

His gallant heart is strongly stirred
By clink of plate or flight of bird,
He has a plumy tail;
At night he treads on stealthy pad
As merry as Sir Galahad
A-seeking of the Grail.

His amiable amber eyes
Are very friendly, very wise;
Like Buddha, grave and fat,
He sits, regardless of applause,
And thinking, as he kneads his paws,
What fun to be a cat!

Christopher Morley

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Hunters and Hunted

He prayeth best who loveth best
Both man and bird and beast.

SAMUEL COLERIDGE

Jim Crow

OH, say, Jim Crow,
Why is it you always go
With a gloomy coat of black
The year long on your back?
Why don't you change its hue,
At least for a day or two,
To red or green or blue?
And why do you always wear
Such a sober, somber air,
As glum as the face of Care?
I wait for your reply,
And into the peaceful pause
There comes your curious, croaking cry,—
"Oh, because! 'cause! 'cause!"

Oh, say, Jim Crow,
Why, when the farmers sow,
And the corn springs up in the row,
And the days that once were brief
Grow long, and laugh into leaf,
Do you play the rascally thief?
I can see by the look in your eye,—
Wary and wise and sly,—
That you know the code in vogue;
Why will you, then, oh, why,
Persist in the path of the rogue?
I hearken for your reply,
And into the empty pause
There rings your graceless, grating cry,—
"Oh, because! 'cause! 'cause!"

And say, Jim Crow,
With all of the lore you know,—

Lore of the wood and field,
Lore of the clouds, and the clear
Depths of the atmosphere,
To our duller ken concealed,—
Why is it you ever speak
With a mingled squawk and a squeak?
You, with your talents all,
And your knowledge of this and that,
Why must you sing like a squall,
And talk like a perfect "flat"?
I listen for your reply,
But in the lapse and the pause
All I hear is your impudent cry,—
"Oh, because! 'cause! 'cause!"

Clinton Scollard

The Owl

IN the hollow tree, in the gray old tower,
The spectral owl doth dwell;
Dull, hated, despised in the sunshine hour,
But at dusk,—he's abroad and well:
Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him;
All mock him outright by day;
But at night, when the woods grow still and dim,
The boldest will shrink away;
O, when the night falls, and roosts the fowl,
Then, then is the reign of the hornèd owl!

And the owl hath a bride who is fond and bold,
And loveth the wood's deep gloom;
And with eyes like the shine of the moonshine cold
She waiteth her ghastly groom!
Not a feather she moves, not a carol she sings,
As she waits in her tree so still;
But when her heart heareth his flapping wings,
She hoots out her welcome shrill!
O, when the moon shines, and the dogs do howl,
Then, then is the cry of the hornèd owl!

Mourn not for the owl nor his gloomy plight!
The owl hath his share of good:
If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,
He is lord in the dark green wood!
Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghastly mate;
They are each unto each a pride—
Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange, dark fate
Hath rent them from all beside!

So when the night falls, and dogs do howl,
Sing Ho! for the reign of the hornèd owl!
We know not always who are kings by day,
But the king of the night is the bold brown owl.

Barry Cornwall

Wild Geese

HOW oft against the sunset sky or moon
I watched that moving zig-zag of spread wings
In unforgotten autumns gone too soon,
In unforgotten springs!

Creatures of desolation, far they fly
Above all lands bound by the curling foam;
In misty fens, wild moors and trackless sky
These wild things have their home.

They know the tundra of Siberian coasts,
And tropic marshes by the Indian seas;
They know the clouds and night and starry hosts
From Crux to Pleiades.

Dark flying rune against the western glow—
It tells the sweep and loneliness of things,
Symbol of autumns vanished long ago,
Symbol of coming springs!

Pai Ta-Shun

The Crow

WITH rakish eye and plenished crop,
Oblivious of the farmer's gun,
Upon the naked ash-tree top
The Crow sits basking in the sun.

An old ungodly rogue, I wot!
For, perched in black against the blue,
His feathers, torn with beak and shot,
Let woeful glints of April through.

The year's new grass, and golden-eyed,
The daisies sparkle underneath,
And chestnut-trees on either side
Have opened every ruddy sheath.

But doubtful still of frost and snow,
The ash alone stands stark and bare,
And on its topmost twig the Crow
Takes the glad morning's sun and air.

William Canton

To a Wild Goose Over Decoys

O LONELY trumpeter, coasting down the sky,
Like a winter leaf blown from the bur-oak tree
By whipping winds, and flapping silverly
Against the sun,—I know your lonely cry.

I know the worn wild heart that bends your flight
And circles you above this beckoning lake,
Eager of neck, to find the honking drake
Who speaks of reedy refuge through the night.

I know the sudden rapture that you fling
In answer to our friendly gander's call—
Halloo! Beware decoys!—or you will fall
With a silver bullet whistling in your wing!

Beat on your weary flight across the blue!
Beware, O traveler, of our gabbling geese!
Beware this weedy counterfeit of peace!—
Oh, I was once a passing bird like you.

Lew Sarett

A Coyote Prowled

A COYOTE came one night to the sea,
And howled at the waves and howled at me,
And the white-maned monster roared and mumbled
At the dog that prowled and starved and grumbled.
Thin and lank and ruffled and grey,
He stalked and stalked in search of prey,
And snarled and snapped and wailed at fate
That dealt him dust and the dregs of hate.
I gave him a bone and words and sighs,
And he showed me his teeth and he showed me his eyes;
And his teeth were clean and strong and white,
And his eyes were fine as a frosty night.

Annie Elizabeth Cheney

White Heron

I SAW a great white heron wing to-day
In shimmering flight above a lilied pond;
A tapering palm flung out a graceful frond
As though to signal it and bid it stay;
But it paused not upon its airy way,
Ascending slowly as though fain and fond
Of its fleet venture, then in skies beyond
Faded until it seemed a speck of gray.

It was to me like some white soul, a space
Out of the limitless vast returned to view
Its earthly haunts, its mortal biding place;
Then upon swift and samite pinions gone
In the diaphanous distances of dawn,
Back to its home in the ethereal blue.

Clinton Scollard

The Wild Duck

A STRANGE thing, that a lark and robin sky
Should drop a wild duck on a little pond
Where cattle drink!—Strange that a duck should fly
Down here, when there are lakes a day beyond! . . .
Slowly it drags across the silken green
Two silver threads—and fastens them quite near,
As if the seam were done. . . . Perhaps the sheen,
Reflecting an old moonlight, drew it here.

Strange, that your eye should waver on the sight,
When it has guided death so oft before
To innocence as wild! . . . And stranger still,
A wild duck should withhold its wings from flight—
As if it had no heart for flying more,
And calmly waited, knowing you would kill.

LeRoy McLeod

Four Little Foxes

SPEAK gently, Spring, and make no sudden sound;
For in my windy valley, yesterday I found
New-born foxes squirming on the ground—
Speak gently.

Walk softly, March, forbear the bitter blow;
Her feet within a trap, her blood upon the snow,
The four little foxes saw their mother go—
Walk softly.

Go lightly, Spring, oh, give them no alarm;
When I covered them with boughs to shelter them from harm,
The thin blue foxes suckled at my arm—
Go lightly.

Step softly, March, with your rampant hurricane;
Nuzzling one another, and whimpering with pain,
The new little foxes are shivering in the rain—
Step softly.

Lew Sarett

The Blind Men and the Elephant

IT was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is like

Is mighty plain," quoth he;
" 'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swirling tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right
And all were in the wrong!

John G. Saxe

The Flight of the Herons

Florida

WE left the levels of the lake;
Through lily-pads we cruised along;
The rustling marsh-grass seemed to make
A softly sibilant undersong.

The water-hyacinths from pools
Looked at us with their violet eyes;
The darters and the gallinules
Upstarted in a swift surprise.

Then herons pinioned as with snow
Sailed from the bearded cypress trees—
A wingèd white against the glow
Of cobalt skies without a breeze.

We followed their majestic flight
Far down the deepening, dazzling day
Until like specks of lovely light
They faded in the far away.

In wonder we could speak no words
Our rapt enchantment to express,
For they were beatific birds
Beyond all dreamed-of loveliness!

Clinton Scollard

The Crow

OLD crow, upon the tall tree-top
I see you sitting at your ease,
You hang upon the highest bough,
And balance in the breeze.

How many miles you've been to-day
Upon your wings so strong and black,
And steered across the dark gray sky
Without or guide or track;

Above the city wrapped in smoke,
Green fields and rivers flowing clear;
Now tell me, as you passed them o'er,
What did you see and hear?

The old crow shakes his sooty wing,
And answers, hoarsely, "Caw, caw, caw,"
And that is all the crow can tell
Of what he heard and saw.

Mrs. Alexander

The Hawk

THOU dost not fly, thou art not perched,
The air is all around:
What is it that can keep thee set,
From falling to the ground?
The concentrating of thy mind
Supports thee in the air;
As thou dost watch the small young birds
With such a deadly care.

My mind has such a hawk as thou,
It is an evil mood;
It comes when there's no cause for grief,
And on my joys doth brood.
Then do I see my life in parts;
The earth receives my bones,
The common air absorbs my mind—
It knows not flowers from stones.

William H. Davies

The Loon

A LONELY lake, a lonely shore,
A lone pine leaning on the moon;
All night the water-beating wings
Of a solitary loon.

With mournful wail from dusk to dawn
He gibbered at the taunting stars—
A hermit-soul gone raving mad,
And beating at his bars.

Lew Sarett

The Brindled Hare

BY grange and castle when the fields were cool
Saint Anselm rode and marked how swans afloat
Upon the lilied waters of the moat
Reposed in love untaught by rod or rule;
And while he paused beside the reedy pool,
A brindled hare with blood upon her coat
Took refuge from the pack's deep baying note
Beneath the scarlet housings of his mule.

But when the savage hunters sought their prey,
At his command their hounds refused to spring,
Held back like wolves within a forest snare;
And with bent bows, they watched him ride away,
Tender as Christ Who heals each broken thing,
Bearing against his breast the wounded hare.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

Hawk

I SEE you dart, swift pirate of the air,
Swooping upon your unsuspecting prey,
A dusky blot upon the face of day.
Eager to seize, unpitying to spare,
And fain to take your victim unaware
As it pursues its unprotected way;
A sudden waft of wings—a dire dismay—
And then the inevitable and dark despair.

Thus Death and Life, pursuer and pursued,
While travailing man upon the earth draws breath;
Calm for a space and the contented mood,
Then as the years pass, and time gathereth,
The stir of pinions and the certitude
Of the sharp talons and the clutch of Death.

Clinton Scollard

The Bittern

I WISH I were a bittern,
A tall, brown bittern
To walk among the weeds
Where the sunny water
Lay without a ripple;
Where the little frogs were reared,
And half in fear of me;
Where the vibrant dragon-flies
Sped before my laughing eyes.
A green-legged bittern
Wading, I would be,
Looking for worms and water-bugs,
Eating them, quietly.

Oh, the cool sandy mud
And the warm low breeze!
I could go in wading
Up to my knees,
And if I heard the merest stir—
If any one should pass—
I'd throw back my head
And look like the grass.

Roberta T. Swartz

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The Panther

THE moon shears up on Tahoe now;
The panther leaps to the tamarack bough.
She crouches, hugging the crooked limb;
She hears the nearing steps of him
Who sent the little puff of smoke
That stretched her mate beneath the oak.

Her eyes burn beryl, two yellow balls,
As Fate counts out his last footfalls.
A sudden spring, a demon cry,
Carnivorous laughter to the sky.
Her teeth are fastened in his throat
(The moon rides in her silver boat)
And now one scream of long delight
Across the caverns of the night!

Edwin Markham

The Crow

WINGING, swinging down the flaw—
Caw! caw-caw! caw!
Through the gloom and through the glow
Overhead goes the crow.

Though they say he heeds no law—
Caw! caw-caw! caw!
And declare him rascal, thief,
Cry his days should be brief,

Yet my fancy loves to draw—
Caw! caw-caw! caw!
Pictures of him that denote
He's not black like his coat.

In my reason may be flaw—
Caw! caw-caw! caw!
Yet, in spite of all, I know
Somehow I like the crow!

Clinton Scollard

The Monkey

I SAW you hunched and shivering on the stones,
The bleak wind piercing to your fragile bones,
Your shabby scarlet all inadequate:
A little ape that had such human eyes
They seemed to hide behind their miseries—
Their dumb and hopeless bowing down to fate—
Some puzzled wonder. Was your monkey soul
Sickening with memories of gorgeous days,
Of tropic playfellows and forest ways,
Where, agile, you could swing from bole to bole
In an enchanted twilight with great flowers
For stars; or on a bough the long night hours
Sit out in rows, and chatter at the moon?
Shuffling you went, your tiny chilly hand
Outstretched for what you did not understand;
Your puckered mournful face begging a boon
That but enslaved you more. They who passed by
Saw nothing sorrowful; gave laugh or stare,
Unheeding that the little antic there
Played in the gutter such a tragedy.

Nancy Campbell

Prairie Chickens

FROM brown ploughed hillocks
In early red morning,
They wake the tardy sower with their cheerful cry.
A mellow boom and whoop
That held a warning,
A song that brought the seed-time very nigh,
The circling, splendid anthem of their greeting,
Ran like the morning beating
Of a hundred mellow drums—
Boom, boom, boom!
Each hillock's top repeating
Like cannon answering cannon
When the golden sunset comes.

They drum no more,
Those splendid springtime pickets,
The sweep of share and sickle
Has thrust them from the hills;
They have vanished from the prairie
Like the partridge from the thickets,
They have perished from the sportsman,
Who kills, and kills, and kills!

Hamlin Garland

The Captive Lion

THOU that in fury with thy knotted tail
Hast made this iron floor thy beaten drum;
That now in silence walks thy little space—
Like a sea-captain—careless what may come:

What power has brought your majesty to this,
Who gave those eyes their dull and sleepy look;
Who took the lightning out, and from thy throat
The thunder when the whole wide forest shook?

It was that man who went again, alone,
Into thy forest dark—Lord, he was brave!
That man a fly has killed, whose bones are left
Unburied till an earthquake digs his grave.

William H. Davies

The Loon

WAS never thing,
With leg or wing,
That could my ditty croon;
But mine emerald head,
By mine eye-ball red,
There's devil in the egg of the loon.

To myself I mutter;
The pale leaves flutter,
The lake lifts not a wave;
I laugh!—a blast
Like the trump at last,
When the men-things jump from the grave.

Ha, ha! Ho, ho!
The black winds know;
The sun is blown to a blot.
The storm winds meet,
They blacken and beat;
The shore and the sky are not.

Ha, ha! Ho, ho!
The winds play so
With the Lord of the Lake alone.
The raving rout,
They shriek and shout;
The demon's laugh is mine own.

The wild winds rake,
They pile the lake;
Ha, ha! His brain is chaff,
The mad-cap loon,
They hatch i' the moon—
Ha, ha! I laugh and I laugh.

John Vance Cheney

Poet and Crow

Poet

FOR once, old ebon buccaneer,
A bit of panegyric hear.
A few yet walk the earth
Who know your place and worth.
We dare avow it was *your* croak
The first the mother silence broke,
And beardless Time stared round,
Astonished at the sound.
An elemental, cosmic hymn,
Close as the bark is to the limb,
None of the wild might trimmed away,
Native as sunlight to the day,
Your song, in valley and on hill,
Holds fast the hale, unchanging art
Of Nature, her unbroken will,
The secret of her sturdy heart.
That gride—indigenous, grim—
That rasp on horror's rim,
In one ear rings forever true;
It thrills one bosom through and through,—
Nature's. To her you sing,
To her, to her you cling;
Your whole demeanor is devotion,—
All that grave and stately motion,
That scorn of them that dare be bold
Against the ancient iron mould.
Courage from claw to beak,
You brace us, worn and weak;
'T is marrow for the bones when forth
You sally 'gainst the braggart North,
Clinch with him as mixed foe with foe

The elements, long, long ago,
When slow toward form the crude earth curled,
And chaos woke, and was a world.
But you have, too, your gracious ways;
Right well you love the buddy days,
The rondeaus that the robins sing,
The bluebird music, sweet with Spring.
Then joy it is to see
You on the dreamy tree,
Armored in darkness, in your throat
The potence of the olden note,
Great faith's own minstrelsy:
"Let none despair, nor once forget;
Lo, there is corn in Egypt yet!"
And when 't is summer in the land,
And all the rule is love's own hand,
Then in yon speary field of mine
Courtly you swagger, stride, and shine,
Liege lord, by immemorial right,
Throughout the kingdom of God's light.

Crow

I'm a prince of the air,
One scarcely made to scare
At the like of man or his image;
I'm Crow, old Crow, stiff up for a scrimmage:
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw—
Caw, caw, caw!

You are you, I am Crow,
A thing or two I know;
I sniff the trigger and the barrel,

Then off I flop, I flop and I carol,—
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw—
Caw, caw, caw!

I am Crow, you are you,
I know a thing or two;
A man may be of straw,
But Crow is tough stuff from beak to claw;
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw—
Caw, caw, caw!

I was born on the hill,
And have always had my will;
I am grit and gristle and brain,
My every feather is dyed in the grain:
And it's out in the morn,
When the dew is on the corn,
For to fill my maw—
Caw, caw, caw!

John Vance Cheney

The Parley

TO-DAY I heard a parley of the crows
At the wood edge, and one austere old fellow,
In tones half raucous and with mien half mellow,
Declaimed about the onset of the snows.
"They'll soon be here and add unto our woes,"
Declared he, "for the blue birds and the yellow
Have fled where the white tempests do not bellow,
But the palm waves and the hibiscus blows.

Let us take wing and follow!" Cried another,
As pert as Puck, as gay as Punchinello:
"We cannot change our coats, dear elder brother,
Nor make our voices like the violoncello;
A crow's crow—of that there is no doubt;
Why should we not be game—and stick it out?"

Clinton Scollard

The Hunter

ONE came chasing the fallow deer
When all the wood was green,
But through my heart an arrow went
That ne'er by him was seen—
Ah me!
That ne'er by him was seen.

One came hunting the eagle king
When all the wood was brown,
But over me a lure was cast
That dragged my proud heart down—
Ah me!
That dragged my proud heart down.

One came tracking the mighty boar
When all the wood was white,
But from my wound the red drops fell
That guided him that night—
Ah me!
That guided him that night.

Josephine Dodge Daskam

Blacktail Deer

THE blacktail held his tawny marble pose,
With every supple muscle set to spring,
Nosing the tainted air—his slender limbs
And sinews like corded copper quivering.

Ponderous the minutes, while his smoldering eyes
Went burning over me, and searching mine;
His heart ticked off each moment as he stood
Waiting an ominous word, a sound, a sign.

I tossed a friendly gesture! The sinews snapped
And flung his bulk of rippled tawny stone
Over an alder, as when a bended pine,
Released from pressure, catapults a cone.

Bending an arch above the alder-crown,
In a stream of whistling wind the great buck went,
Flirting his tail in exclamation marks
To punctuate his vast astonishment.

Lew Sarett

Grizzly

COWARD,—of heroic size,
In whose lazy muscles lies
Strength we fear and yet despise;
Savage,—whose relentless tusks
Are content with acorn husks;
Robber,—whose exploits ne'er soared
O'er the bee's or squirrel's hoard;
Whiskered chin, and feeble nose,
Claws of steel on baby toes,—
Here, in solitude and shade,
Shambling, shuffling plantigrade,
Be thy courses undismayed!

Here, where Nature makes thy bed,
Let thy rude, half-human tread
Point to hidden Indian springs,
Lost in ferns and fragrant grasses,
Hovered o'er by timid wings,
Where the wood-duck lightly passes,
Where the wild bee holds her sweets,
Epicurean retreats,
Fit for thee, and better than
Fearful spoils of dangerous man.
In thy fat-jowled deviltry
Friar Tuck shall live in thee;
Thou mayest levy tithe and dole;
Thou shalt spread a woodland cheer,
From the pilgrim taking toll;
Match thy cunning with his fear;
Eat, and drink, and have thy fill;
Yet remain an outlaw still!

Francis Bret Harte

Coyote

A DIM lithe shape moves over the mesa,
Roves with the night wind up and down;
The light-foot ghost, the wild dog of the shadow,
Howls on the level beyond the town.
Cry, cry, Coyote!

No fellow has he, with leg or wing,
No mate has that spectre, in fur or feather;
In the sage bush is whelped a fuzzy thing,
And mischief itself helps lick him together.
Up, cub Coyote!

The winds come blowing over and over,
The great white moon is looking down;
In the throat of the dog is devil's laughter.
Is he baying the moon or baying the town?
Howl, howl, Coyote!

The shadow-dog on the windy mesa,
He sits, and he laughs in his devil's way.
Look to the roost and lock up the lambkin;
A deal may happen 'twixt now and the day.
Ha, ha, Coyote!

John Vance Cheney

To a Captive Crane

HO, brother! Art thou prisoned too?
Is thy heart hot with restless pain?
I heard the call thy bugle blew
Here by the bleak and chilling main
(Whilst round me shaven parks are spread
And cindered drives wind on and on);
And at thy cry, thy lifted head,
My gladdened heart was westward drawn.

O splendid bird! your trumpet brings
To my lone heart the prairie springs.

Hamlin Garland

The Tiger

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burned that fire within thy eyes?
On what wings dared He aspire?
What the hand dared seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
When thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand formed thy dread feet?

What the hammer, what the chain,
Knit thy strength and forged thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dared thy deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

In Cool, Green Haunts

A SWEET, deep sense of mystery filled the wood.
A star, like that which woke o'er Bethlehem,
Shone on the still pool's brow for diadem—
The first to fall of summer's multitude!
In cool, green haunts, where, haply, Robin Hood
Ranged royally, of old, with all his train,
A hushed expectance, such as augurs rain,
Enthralled me and possessed me where I stood.

Then came the wind, with low word as he went;
The quick wren, swift repeating what he said;
A chattering chipmunk lured me on and led
Where scented brakes 'neath some wee burden bent:—
One look—'twas this those wild things yearned to say:
"A little brown-eyed fawn was born to-day!"

Mahlon Leonard Fisher

The Owls

THREE little feathery owls flew overhead
As I walked down the frozen garden path;
One on the chestnut lit, one chose the pine,
And one a twisted pear-tree, bare and brown.
There in the garden it was still as death;
Beyond the wintry meadows glowed the west,
Rose that receded swiftly into gray;
The little owls and I seemed all that lived.
Softly I tiptoed near the chestnut-tree,
Two little, shining, curious eyes looked out;
And from the pear-tree two, and from the pine.
I fancied for the moment we were friends.

Helen Granville-Barker

Coyote

BLOWN out of the prairie in twilight and dew,
Half bold and half timid, yet lazy all through;
Loath ever to leave, and yet fearful to stay,
He limps in the clearing,—an outcast in gray.

A shade on the stubble, a ghost by the wall,
Now leaping, now limping, now risking a fall,
Lop-eared and large-jointed, but ever alway
A thoroughly vagabond outcast in gray.

Here, Carlo, old fellow,—he's one of your kind,—
Go, seek him, and bring him in out of the wind.
What! snarling, my Carlo! So—even dogs may
Deny their own kin in the outcast in gray.

Well, take what you will,—though it be on the sly,
Marauding, or begging,—I shall not ask why;
But will call it a dole, just to help on his way
A four-footed friar in orders of gray!

Francis Bret Harte

Curlew Calling

CURLEW calling down the slack,
When gray rains are falling,
From the bitter town and black,
Curlew, I am coming back,
Curlew calling!

Hawk, a-hover on the wind,
Look for me, your lover,
Come from barren ways and blind,
Where men seek but never find,—
Hawk a-hover!

Gray snipe drumming in the gloam,
I am coming, coming,
Never from my kind to roam.
Gray snipe, I am coming home,
Gray snipe drumming.

W. W. Gibson

Baboon

AT eight o'clock in the evening,
And at two in the afternoon
The monster curtains open,
The fiddles creak and croon;
And then I bow to the people—
A lumbering baboon.

I wonder why I do it?
Why do the humans stare
From even rows of shadow
Behind the footlights' glare?
Why do I go through my weary tricks
On a table and a chair?

They laugh and clap and giggle,
They never seem to tire,
For I am quite amusing
As I dance upon a wire,
Or leap, at my master's signal,
Through golden hoops of fire.

I cannot smile, like the people,
I cannot speak at all;
I pirouette insanely
In the foolish carnival;
Yet could I laugh, oh, I would laugh
When the velvet curtains fall!

For I wonder why those people
Sit in such even rows,
And smile at my useless knowledge,
Laugh at my mincing toes,

And dream that they have wisdom!—
How little a human knows!

And why do they always gather
In houses bright and hot,
When they might be out in the open
In a place I've never forgot?
Why do they live in a shell like this,
And bid me share their lot?

And why is my life a schedule,
Run by rote and rule?
I was not meant for theatres,
I was not made for school;
I was not meant to caper here,
A thing of ridicule!

I was not meant to be the slave
Of a man in a shiny suit,
Or bring the golden dollars in,
To stand up and salute;
The good God put me in a world
To be a happy brute!

But at eight o'clock each evening,
And at two in the afternoon
The monster curtains open,
The fiddles creak and croon;
And I bow to the senseless people—
A sensible baboon!

Charles Hanson Towne

The Lyric Choir

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The Angel

ONE morning very early—
The moon was in the sky—
I heard an angel singing
Up in the tree-top high.

So sweet it was, I held my breath
That not a note I'd miss.
I'm sure that only angels
Could ever sing like this.

I softly to my window crept,
And in the apple-tree
A shy brown thrush was singing,
Alone and happily.

Oh, how he swelled his little throat
And lifted up his head
To sing his morning praise to God,
While folks were yet in bed!

And so *he* was my angel;
And now I feel quite wise,
For well I know that thrushes are
Just angels in disguise.

Mary Elizabeth Rodhouse

Nightingales

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sight can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

Robert Bridges

O Lark of the Summer Morning

I LOVE to lie in the clover,
With the lark like a speck in the sky,
While its small throat runneth over
With praise it sendeth on high.

O lark of the summer morning,
Teach, teach me the song that you sing,
I would learn without lightness or scorning,
To give praise for every good thing.

O lark of the summer morning!
Give, give me of praying the key,
And I'll learn without lightness or scorning
As I did at my mother's knee.

From the Japanese

Thrush Song

HARK to the song of the thrush,
At the fall of the dusk and dew;
Piercing the twilight hush,
Thrilling it through and through!
While the first stars twinkle, twinkle,
And the little leaves crinkle, crinkle,
Low as a rill,
Clear as a bell,
Down from the hill,
Up from the dell,
And all for me and you!

List to the song of the thrush
From the shadows cool and deep,
From the heart of the underbrush
Where the pixy people creep!
While the winds grow crisper, crisper,
And the little leaves whisper, whisper,
Fine as a flute
Blown at the morn,
Soft as a lute
Or fairy horn,
A call to the land of sleep!

Clinton Scollard

A Word with a Skylark

IF this be all, for which I've listened long,
Oh, spirit of the dew,
You did not sing to Shelley such a song
As Shelley sang to you.

Yet, with this ruined Old World for a nest,
Worm-eaten through and through,—
This waste of grave-dust stamped with crown and crest,—
What better could you do?

Ah me! but when the world and I were young,
There was an apple-tree,
There was a voice in the dawn that sung
The buds awake—ah me!

Oh, Lark of Europe, downward fluttering near,
Like some spent leaf at best,
You'd never sing again if you could hear
My Bluebird of the West!

Sarah Piatt

The Throstle

"SUMMER is coming, summer is coming,
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then *so* new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again,"
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
Oh, warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

Alfred Tennyson

The Lark

Salisbury, England

A CLOSE gray sky,
And poplars gray and high,
The country-side along;
The steeple bold
Across the acres old—
And then a song!

Oh, far, far, far,
As any spire or star,
Beyond the cloistered wall!
Oh, high, high, high,
A heart-throb in the sky—
Then not at all!

Lizette Woodworth Reese

Nightingales

AT sunset my brown nightingales
Hidden and hushed all day,
Ring vespers, while the color pales
And fades to twilight gray:
The little mellow bells they ring,
The little flutes they play,
Are soft as though for practicing
The things they want to say.
It's when the dark has floated down
To hide and guard and fold,
I know their throats that look so brown,
Are really made of gold.
No music I have ever heard
Can call as sweet as they!
I wonder if it *is* a bird
That sings within the hidden tree,
Or some shy angel calling me
To follow far away?

Grace Hazard Conkling

The Wise Thrush

AND after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows—
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!

Robert Browning

The Nightingale Near the House

HERE is the soundless cypress on the lawn;
It listens, listens. Taller trees beyond
Listen. The moon at the unruffled pond
Stares. And you sing, you sing.

That star-enchanted song falls through the air
From lawn to lawn down terraces of sound,
Darts in white arrows on the shadowed ground;
And all the night you sing.

My dreams are flowers to which you are a bee
As all night long I listen, and my brain
Receives your song; then loses it again
In moonlight on the lawn.

Now is your voice a marble high and white,
Then like a mist on fields of Paradise,
Now is a raging fire, then is like ice,
Then breaks, and it is dawn.

Harold Monro

The Skylark

HOW the blithe Lark runs up the golden stair
That leans through cloudy gates from Heaven to Earth
And all alone in the empyreal air
Fills it with jubilant sweet songs of mirth;
How far he seems, how far
With the light upon his wings.
Is it a bird, or star
That shines, and sings?

What matter if the days be dark and frore,
That sunbeam tells of other days to be,
And singing in the light that floods him o'er
In joy he overtakes Futurity;
Under cloud arches vast
He peeps, and sees behind
Great Summer coming fast
Adown the wind!

And now he dives into a rainbow's rivers,
In streams of gold and purple he is drowned,
Shrilly the arrows of his song he shivers,
As though the stormy drops were turned to sound;
And now he issues through,
He scales a cloudy tower,
Faintly, like falling dew,
His fast notes shower.

Let every wind be hushed, that I may hear
The wondrous things he tells the World below.
Things that we dream of he is watching near,
Hopes that we never dreamed he would bestow;
Alas! the storm hath rolled

Back the gold gates again,
Or surely he had told
All Heaven to men!

So the victorious Poet sings alone,
And fills with light his solitary home,
And through that glory sees new worlds foreshown,
And hears high songs, and triumphs yet to come;
He waves the air of Time
With thrills of golden chords,
And makes the world to climb
On linkèd words.

Blest is the man who with the sound of song
Can charm away the heartache, and forget
The frost of Penury, and the stings of Wrong,
And drown the fatal whisper of Regret!
Darker are the abodes
Of Kings, though his be poor,
While Fancies, like the Gods,
Pass through his door.

Singing thou scalest Heaven upon thy wings,
Thou liftest a glad heart into the skies;
He makest his own sunrise, while he sings,
And turns the dusky Earth to Paradise;
I see thee sail along
Far up the sunny streams,
Unseen I hear his song,
I see his dreams.

Frederick Tennyson

The Wood-Thrush

WHEN lilies by the river fill with sun,
And banks with clematis are overrun;

When winds are weighed with fern-sweet from the hill,
And hawks wheel in the noontide hot and still;

When thistle-tops are silvered, every one,
And fly-lamps flicker ere the day is done,—

Nature bethinks her how to crown these things.
At twilight she decides: the wood-thrush sings.

John Vance Cheney

Lark's Song

IN Mercer Street the light slants down,
And straightway an enchanted town
Is round him, pinnacle and spire
Flash back, elate, the sudden fire;
And clear above the silent street
Falls suddenly and strangely sweet
The lark's song. Bubbling, note on note
Rise fountain-like, o'erflow and float
Tide upon tide, and make more fair
The magic of the sunlit air.
No more the cage can do him wrong,
All is forgotten save his song:
He has forgot the ways of men,
Wide heaven is over him again,
And round him the wide fields of dew
That his first infant mornings knew,
Ere yet the dolorous years had brought
The hours of captive anguish, fraught
With the vile clamour of the street,
The insult of the passing feet,
The torture of the daily round,
The organ's blasphemy of sound.
Sudden some old swift memory brings
The knowledge of forgotten wings,
He springs elate and panting falls
At the rude touch of prison walls.
Silence. Again the street is grey;
Shut down the windows. Work-a-day.

Seumas O'Sullivan

A Nightingale at Fresnoy

NEVER, they say, were guns so loud,
Never were flames so bright,
As those that made at Fresnoy
Inferno of the night;

And when the searchlight fires lit
The slender, new-green trees,
They could be seen to tremble
As never in a breeze.

At Fresnoy in the little wood
Just greening with the spring,
A nightingale, undaunted,
Lifted his voice to sing;

And in each moment's silence
When torn earth held her breath,
Before the fearful guns again
Uttered their Song of Death,—

The nightingale, oblivious
Of all the ghastly strife,
Was heard within the little wood
To sing the Song of Life!

Jessie B. Rittenhouse

To the Lark

SENTINEL of the morning light!
Reveler of the spring!
How sweetly, nobly wild thy flight,
Thy boundless journeying:
Far from the brethren of the woods, alone,
A hermit chorister before God's throne!

Oh! wilt thou climb yon heavens for me,
Yon rampart's starry height,
Thou interlude of melody
'Twixt darkness and the light,
And seek with heaven's first dawn upon thy crest,
My lady-love, the moonbeam of the west?

Dafydd Ap Gwilym

The Wood Thrush at Eve

AT the wood margin when the sun sank low,
We lingered speechless, being loath to leave
The cool, the calm, the quiet touch of eve,
And all the glamour of the afterglow.
We watched the purple shadows lengthen slow,
Saw the swift swallows through the clear air cleave,
And bats begin their wayward flight to weave,
Then rose reluctantly, and turned to go.

But ere we won beyond the warder trees,
From out the dim deep copse that hid the swale
Welled of a sudden flute-like harmonies
Flooding the twilight, scale on silvery scale,
As though we heard, across the sundering seas,
The pain and passion of the nightingale.

Clinton Scollard

The Nightingales of Flanders

"Le rossignol n'est pas mobilisé"
A French Soldier

THE nightingales of Flanders,
They have not gone to war.
A soldier heard them singing
Where they had sung before.

The earth was torn and quaking,
The sky about to fall.
The nightingales of Flanders,
They minded not at all.

At intervals he heard them
Between the guns, he said,
Making a thrilling music
Above the listening dead.

Of woodland and of orchard
And roadside tree bereft,
The nightingales of Flanders
Were singing, *"France is left!"*

Grace Hazard Conkling

The Meadow Lark

A BRAVE little bird that fears not God,
A voice that breaks from the snow-wet clod
With prophecy of sunny sod,
Set thick with wind-waved goldenrod.

From the first bare clod in the raw, cold spring,
From the last bare clod, when fall winds sting,
The farm-boy hears his brave song ring,
And work for the time is a pleasant thing.

Hamlin Garland

The Hermit Thrush

WHILE walking through a lonely wood
I heard a lovely voice;
A voice so fresh and true and good
It made my heart rejoice.

It sounded like a Sunday bell
Rung softly in a town,
Or like a stream that in a dell
Forever trickles down.

It seemed to be a voice of love
That always had loved me,
So softly it rang out above,
So wild and wanderingly.

O Voice, were you a golden dove,
Or just a plain gray bird?
O Voice, you are my wandering love
Lost—yet forever heard.

Arvia MacKaye

Minor Singers

Bird, as you call me to the window-ledge
With flashes and blue flutterings,
It seems the gray world's edge;
And, with the thrill your light touch brings,
I am your kin and know the lift of wings.

V. H. FRIEDLAENDER

Here Be My Loves

HERE be my loves among the feathered things
The angels lend their tunes to, and their wings;

The lowly sparrows, cradled on the ground,
To hear earth's heart, and sing that happy sound;

The thrushes, they of melody so pure
Whether 'tis earth's or Heaven's I am not sure;

The robins, who with their brave April note,
Start that abashing spasm midway my throat;

The bluebirds, talking in the apple-tree,
Luring my heart off somewhere over sea.

John Vance Cheney

The Peter-Bird

WHEN summer's birds are bringing
Their clear, concerted singing,
Singing gladder, gladder, gladder in their glees;
When finches and the thrushes
Make vocal all the bushes,
And the lark his note of morning welcome frees—
I hear no meter sweeter
Than *"Peter—Peter—Peter,"*
That the Peter-bird is singing in my trees.

How good to lie and listen,
Where brooks in summer glisten,
As they ripple, ripple, ripple to the seas;
Where faintly in the pebbles
They play their pretty trebles
In the plaintive, sad, and tender minor keys;
But they can play no meter
Like *"Peter—Peter—Peter,"*
That the Peter-bird is singing in my trees.

When softly at the mooning
I hear the clover crooning
Of its nectar, nectar, nectar, and the bees;
When corn a-field is drying,
And fading blades are flying
With a floating pennon-rustle in the breeze,
Oh, sweet it is, but sweeter
Is *"Peter—Peter—Peter,"*
That the Peter-bird is singing in my trees.

When summer's joy is over
And bees have robbed the clover,
Leaving odor, only odor, to appease;
When red autumnal juices

Make music in the sluices
As the fruity currents gurgle from their lees;
The wine-tide sings not sweeter
Than *"Peter—Peter—Peter,"*
That the Peter-bird is singing in my trees.

Henry Thompson Stanton

Vespers

O BLACKBIRD what a boy you are!
How you do go it!
Blowing your bugle to that one sweet star,
How you do blow it!
And does she hear you, blackbird boy, so far?
Or is it wasted breath?
"Good Lord! She is so bright
To-night!"
The blackbird saith.

T. E. Brown

Overtones

I HEARD a bird at break of day
Sing from the autumn trees
A song so mystical and calm,
So full of certainties,

No man, I think, could listen long
Except upon his knees.
Yet this was but a simple bird,
Alone, among dead trees.

William Alexander Percy

The Oriole's Secret

TO hear an oriole sing
May be a common thing,
Or only a divine.

It is not of the bird
Who sings the same, unheard,
As unto crowd.

The fashion of the ear
Attireth that it hear
In dun or fair.

So whether it be rune,
Or whether it be none,
Is of within;

The "tune is in the tree,"
The sceptic showeth me;
"No, sir! In thee!"

Emily Dickinson

Bird Song

THE robin sings of willow-buds,
Of snowflakes on the green;
The bluebird sings of Mayflowers,
The crackling leaves between;
The veery has a thousand tales
To tell to girl and boy;
But the oriole, the oriole,
Sings, "Joy! Joy! Joy!"

The pewee calls his little mate,
Sweet Phoebe, gone astray,
The warbler sings, "What fun, what fun,
To tilt upon the spray!"
The cuckoo has no song, but clucks,
Like any wooden toy;
But the oriole, the oriole,
Sings, "Joy! Joy! Joy!"

The grosbeak sings the rose's birth,
And paints her on his breast;
The sparrow sings of speckled eggs,
Soft brooded in the nest.
The wood-thrush sings of peace, "Sweet peace,
Sweet peace," without alloy;
But the oriole, the oriole,
Sings, "Joy! Joy! Joy!"

Laura E. Richards

The Blackbird

THE nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
Our hearts and lips together.

W. E. Henley

The Song Sparrow

WHEN June was cool and clover long
And birds were glad in soul and body,
I sat me down to make a song,
And sweltered in my study:
I swinked and sweat with weary art—
To tell how merry was my heart.

With weary art and wordy choice
I toiled, when sudden—low and breezy—
I heard a little friendly voice
Call: *Simple, simple, so easy!*
I heard, yet sat apart in dole—
To sing how social was my soul.

In vain!—That artless voice went round
In tiny echoes, faint and teasy.
I rose: "What toil, then, have you found
Simple, simple, so easy?"
Dauntless, the bird, with dewy beak,
Carolled again his cool critique.

Nay, song it is a simple thing
For hearts that seek no reason.
Relentless bird, why should you sing
Who *are* the happy season?—
Still *why!* The root of joy I seek
While laughter ripples from your beak.

No wonder, then, the bard's pen creaks,
The critic's drone grows wheezy,
When Joy and June bird never seeks
Is *simple, simple, so easy!*
While we, who find our art so long,
Still make a subterfuge—of song!

Percy MacKaye

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The Robin

THE robin is the one
That interrupts the morn
With hurried, few, express reports
When March is scarcely on.

The robin is the one
That overflows the noon
With her cherubic quantity,
And April but begun.

The robin is the one
That speechless from her nest
Submits that home and certainty
And sanctity are best.

Emily Dickinson

A Starling's Spring Rondel

I CLINK my castanet
And beat my little drum;
For spring at last has come,
And on my parapet
Of chestnut, gummy-wet,
Where bees begin to hum,
I clink my castanet,
And beat my little drum.

"Spring goes," you say, "suns set."
So be it! Why be glum?
Enough, the spring has come;
And without fear or fret
I clink my castanet,
And beat my little drum.

James Cousins

Cuckoo

HIS voice runs before me; I follow, it flies;
It is now in the meadow, and now 'mid the skies;
So blithesome, so lightsome, now distant, now here,
And when he calls "Cuckoo," the summer is near.

He calls back the roses, red roses that went
At the first blast of winter, so sad and forspent,
With the dew in their bosoms, young roses and dear,
And when he calls "Cuckoo," the summer is near.

I would twine him a gold cage, but what would he do,
For his world of the emerald, his bath in the blue,
And his wee feathered comrades to make him good cheer?
And when he calls "Cuckoo," the summer is near.

Now, blackbird, give over your harping of gold!
Brown thrush and green linnet, your music withhold!
The flutes of the forest are silver and clear,
But when he calls "Cuckoo," the summer is here.

Katherine Tynan-Hinkson

To a Tufted Titmouse

HO, little bird with the crest and air
Of knowing the secrets of everywhere,
Upside down in the tall fir-tree,
Picking and pecking in rollicking glee.
Are you a bird or a fairy, say?
Or a prince bewitched for a year and a day?
Or is there shining beneath the bark,
A golden keyhole in the dark,
And a stair, where lit by the damp wood's fire,
We might climb to the Land of Heart's Desire?
Ho, little bird, your secrets tell.
Tiny gray mischief, we love you well.

Mary Elizabeth Rodhouse

The Robin and the Bee

"I SUPPOSE you know it's Autumn?"
Said the Robin to the Bee;
"And the leaves are getting thinner
On the most courageous tree.
You have noticed that no butterflies
Across the garden rove?
And that every single chestnut
Has been scattered in the grove?
It's a fortnight since the swallows
Took their passage o'er the sea;
So perhaps you know it's Autumn,"
Said the Robin to the Bee.

"Old Winter soon gets busy
When the feeble sunbeams fade
And he turns the flower-beds over
With a white and frosty spade.
He rolls the gravel pathways
Till they ring like iron roads,
And the twigs on all the bushes
With a sparkling cloak he loads.
That's right! Let's both fly southward
Until May once more we see;
When we'll find a warmer welcome,"
Said the Robin to the Bee.

John Lea

The Mocking-Bird and the Donkey

A MOCK-BIRD in a village
Had somehow gained the skill
To imitate the voices
Of animals at will.

And singing in his prison,
Once, at the close of day,
He gave, with great precision,
The donkey's heavy bray.

Well pleased, the mock-bird's master
Sent to the neighbors 'round,
And bade them come together
To hear that curious sound.

They came, and all were talking
In praise of what they heard,
And one delighted lady
Wound fain have bought the bird.

A donkey listened sadly,
And said: "Confess I must
That these are shallow people,
And terribly unjust.

"I'm bigger than the mock-bird,
And better bray than he,
Yet not a soul has uttered
A word in praise of me."

William Cullen Bryant

A Blackbird Suddenly

HEAVEN is in my hand, and I
Touch a heart-beat of the sky,
Hearing a blackbird's cry.

Strange, beautiful, unquiet thing,
Lone flute of God, how can you sing
Winter to spring?

You have outdistanced every voice and word,
And given my spirit wings until it stirred
Like you—a bird!

Joseph Auslander

Three Things to Remember

A ROBIN REDBREAST in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage.

A skylark wounded on the wing
Doth make a cherub cease to sing.

He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be beloved by men.

William Blake

To a Sparrow

BECAUSE you have no fear to mingle
Wings with those of greater part,
So like me, your song I single—
Your sweet impudence of heart.

And when prouder feathers go where
Summer holds her leafy show,
You still come to us from nowhere
Like gray leaves across the snow.

In back ways where odd and end go,
To your meals you drop down sure,
Knowing every broken window
Of the hospitable poor.

There is no bird half so harmless,
None so sweetly rude as you,
None so common and so charmless,
None of virtues nude as you.

But for all your faults I love you,
For you linger with us still,
Though the wintry winds reprove you,
And the snow is on the hill.

Francis Ledwidge

A Spring Meeting

HULLO, Bob Wren!
Are you back again?
Glad to see you so well and so merry;
Fear we're here
Rather early this year!
Dear, but I wish I'd a bite of a cherry!
Just ripe in the South,
Melt in your mouth.
Weren't you sorry to leave the sunny
Land of bloom, and of bees and honey?

By and by here 't will be bright and jolly
With bud and blossom, but somewhere now
The atmosphere seems melancholy,
For there's not a leaf on a single bough;
And the wind, oh, how it makes you shiver,
And long for the balmy air that blows
The reeds that quiver
Above some river
That warm in Floridian sunlight flows!
Have you any new songs to sing this season?
And do you know where you are going to stop?
We've taken rooms in the very top
Of "The Maple"—prices quite within reason.
You've a flat near by that you've leased till fall?
How nice! Then surely you'll come and call.

Clinton Scollard

To an Irish Blackbird

WET your feet, wet your feet,
This is what he seems to say,
Calling from the dewy thicket
At the breaking of the day.

Wet your feet, wet your feet,
Silver toned he sounds the call
From his bramble in the thicket
When the dew is on the fall.

Many times in lands far distant,
In my dreams I hear him play
On his flute within the thicket,
Ere the showers have passed away.

Years have passed since last I heard him,
Since I said a sad adieu
To the early Irish morning
With the rainbow-tinted dew.

And I still can hear him calling
And the call comes clear and sweet,
And I still can see the mornings
With the dew about my feet.

Wet your feet, wet your feet,
Silver toned he sounds the call
From his bramble in the thicket
When the dew is on the fall.

James MacAlpine

Robin

HE takes a lot of staccato steps, stops—
Like a busy toe-dancer with dizzy tops

That never cease spinning, twinkling a minute
Until they come to the end of what's in it.

He runs on a line like a tight-rope walker—
Tries not to look scared—nor to answer a talker.

He might be as deaf as a man who surveys
Two spots with a string for the high wire ways.

No matter how fast he may go or stop dead—
He holds his head still—an oblivious head;

But just down below, they twist and they squirm—
Like a terrified crowd, or an angle worm.

Alfred Kreymborg

From *Blood of Things* by Alfred Kreymborg. Reprinted with special permission of the publishers, Coward-McCann, Inc.

On a Gloomy Easter

I HEAR the robins singing in the rain.
The longed-for Spring is hushed so drearily
That hungry lips cry often wearily,
"Oh, if the blessed sun would shine again!"

I hear the robins singing in the rain.
The misty world lies waiting for the dawn;
The wind sobs at my window and is gone,
And in the silence come old throbs of pain.

But still the robins sing on in the rain,
Not waiting for the morning sun to break,
Nor listening for the violets to wake,
Nor fearing lest the snow may fall again.

My heart sings with the robins in the rain,
For I remember it is Easter morn,
And life and love and peace are all new born,
And joy has triumphed over loss and pain.

Sing on, brave robins, sing on in the rain!
You know behind the clouds the sun must shine,
You know that death means only life divine
And all our losses turn to heavenly gain.

I lie and listen to you in the rain.
Better than Easter bells that do not cease,
Your message from the heart of God's great peace,
And to his arms I turn and sleep again.

Alice Freeman Palmer

The Carpenter-Bird

THERE is a cunning carpenter, who's busy in our tree,
Who's making him a house to hold his tiny family,
Who's finishing it up for them all tidy and all trim.
Hark! Don't you hear his hammer on the old dead limb?

He must be much in earnest, for he works with such a will;
I doubt if any carpenter can show a greater skill,
Or toil with blither cheer until the day grows dim,
With the "tap, tap," of his hammer on the old dead limb!

Oh, can you not imagine how his heart with pride will stir
When he gives a building lesson to each little carpenter!
I know it is this thought that seems to bubble and to brim
Whene'er I hear his hammer on the old dead limb!

Clinton Scollard

Cuckoo

AND so you have come back again,
And it was you I heard
Proclaiming it to all the world—
You most conceited bird.

You talked of nothing but yourself
When you were here before,
Until your voice became so hoarse
That you could talk no more.

And now you fly from bush to bush,
And say "Cuckoo, Cuckoo."
Have you no friends to care about?
No useful work to do?

I hear you're such a lazy bird,
You cannot build a nest;
Perhaps you could if you would try—
We ought to do our best.

The little bird that told me this
Suspected something worse—
That you neglect your little ones,
And put them out to nurse.

Oh, cuckoo! if this story's true,
I think you're much to blame.
Then talk no more about yourself;
Go, hide yourself, for shame!

Unknown

The Blackbird

IN the far corner
close by the swings,
every morning
a blackbird sings.

His bill's so yellow,
his coat's so black,
that he makes a fellow
whistle back.

Ann, my daughter,
thinks that he
sings for us two
especially.

Humbert Wolfe

The Blue Jay

ON the leafless bough a-sway,
What do you say,
Jay?
What is that shrilly note
That bubbles out of your throat?
There, with your head a-tilt,
What do you lilt?

"Chink! cheep! chink!
I think—"
(This with a blink
And a sly
Wink
Of the eye)—
"Winter is far too long;
That is my song."

Clinton Scollard

The Blackbird

EVENING over fields of cloud
In sombre beauty came,
Washing the slumbering trees with mist
And the tall spires with flame.

Then from one of the still trees,
Like drops that run along
The glossy faces of green leaves,
Fell a blackbird's song:

And Memory opened dreaming eyes
And the pale ghosts stirred,
And Heaven and earth went down before
The soft note of a bird.

For as the hidden blackbird spoke
Out of the leafy tree,
One long and shining wave-crest broke
Along a secret sea.

Martin Armstrong

Two Sparrows

TWO sparrows, feeding,
heard a thrush
sing to the dawn.
The first said, "Tush!

In all my life
I never heard
a more affected
singing-bird."

The second said,
"It's you and me,
who slave to keep
the likes of he."

"And if we cared,"
both sparrows said,
"we'd do that singing
on our head."

The thrush pecked sideways,
and was dumb.
"And now," they screamed,
"he's pinched our crumb."

Humbert Wolfe

A Robin on a Branch

IF a wren can cling
To a spray a-swing
In the mad May wind, and sing and sing,
As if she'd burst for joy,
Why cannot I
Contented lie
In His quiet arms beneath the sky,
Unmoved by earth's annoy?

F. B. Meyer

To an Oriole

HOW falls it, oriole, that thou hast come to fly
In tropic splendor through our Northern sky?

At some glad moment was it Nature's choice
To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?

Or did some orange tulip, flaked with black,
In some forgotten garden, ages back,

Yearning toward Heaven until its wish was heard,
Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

Edgar Fawcett

The Secret

O LITTLE bird, you sing
As if all months were June;
Pray tell me ere you go
The secret of your tune?

"I have no hidden word
To tell, nor mystic art;
I only know I sing
The song within my heart!"

Arthur Wallace Peach

The Starling

A STARLING whistles from the chimney pot
And all my world, as by some magic spell,
Is touched to loveliness: now quite forgot
Are the drab streets; I see a dell
Where happy wild things play, the honey bees,
Rabbits with startled eyes and listening ears,
Scared by the smallest whisper of the breeze
That laughs among the grasses at their fears;

Blue butterflies, like scraps of the blue sky,
Flit to and fro, and with the singing stream
A merry water-wagtail hurries by.
O lovely ways, and are they but a dream!
Sweet feathered conjuror, must my senses wake!
Pipe on, lest this too tired heart should break.

E. Joyce Harrison

The Birds

I THOUGHT to shoulder Time but those sad birds
Would speak forever with such fiery words,
Such spinning gusts of warning tenderness
That I was helpless in my nakedness;
And sat down in the desert where the sand
Obliterated years on every hand,
So loath was I to listen. "See," I said,
"It would be better far if I were dead,
For dead men cannot hear such lovely calls
From bitter birds by Babylonian walls."

And now while chuckling Time still nudges me
Through vague savannahs of immensity,
Speaking in heavy darkness of sharp sighs
Of my befooled and barren enterprise,
And all I was flees in a shadow-show
Of antic shapes in sad imbroglio,
I cry to hear those birds who sing no more
By crumbling wall and splintered palace door,
And search in vain to see those feathered crests
Aflare like jewels in their last year's nests.

Herbert Gorman

To the Mocking-Bird

WINGED mimic of the woods! thou motley fool!
Who shall thy gay buffoonery describe?
Thine ever-ready notes of ridicule
Pursue thy fellows still with jest and gibe.
Wit, sophist, songster, Yorick of thy tribe,
Thou sportive satirist of Nature's school,
To thee the palm of scoffing we ascribe,
Arch-mocker and mad Abbot of Misrule!

For such thou art by day,—but all night long
Thou pourest a soft, sweet, pensive, solemn strain,
As if thou didst in this thy moonlight song
Like to the melancholy Jacques complain,
Musing on falsehood, folly, vice, and wrong,
And sighing for thy motley coat again.

Richard Henry Wilde

A Humming-Bird

WHEN the mild gold stars flower out,
As the summer gloaming goes,
A dim shape quivers about
Some sweet rich heart of a rose.

If you watch its fluttering poise,
From palpitant wings will steal
A hum like the eerie noise
Of an elfin spinning-wheel!

And then from the shape's vague sheen,
Quick lustres of blue will float,
That melt in luminous green
Round a glimmer of ruby throat!

But fleetly across the gloom
This tremulous shape will dart,
While searching from some fresh bloom,
To quiver about its heart.

Then you, by thoughts of it stirred,
Will dreamily question them;
"Is it a gem, half bird,
Or is it a bird, half gem?"

Edgar Fawcett

A Southern Cardinal

PERCHED on a palmetto spray
Sang a cardinal to-day—
Just a flash of lyric fire
Spiraling its way

Up the bright Floridian blue.
Fresh as dawn and sweet as dew;
Then a burning waft of wings,
And the songster flew;

Flew as with an arrowy aim
No restraining hand could tame;
Flew, but singing in my heart
Left its lyric flame.

Clinton Scollard

The Humming-Bird

A FLASH of harmless lightning,
A mist of rainbow dyes,
The burnished sunbeams brightening,
From flower to flower he flies:

While wakes the nodding blossom,
But just too late to see
What lip hath touched her bosom
And drained her nectary.

John B. Tabb

Children of Wisdom

THE builder of the hang-bird's nest
Knows which fine thread will hold the best;

The swallow knows the bit of clay,
If so she stick it it will stay;

The squirrel knows the nut to bin,
The spider from which spray to spin;

The bee knows where the honey is,
The thrushes get the melodies.

. . . . . .

Proud man achieves, each day once more,
The folly of the day before.

John Vance Cheney

Birds of the Open Sky

My thoughts are mighty sea-gulls,
Shining out to sea;
As white and strong as sea-gulls,
As avid as the sea!
They rest upon the green waves,
Then mount up one by one.
My thoughts are lordly sea-gulls
Lovely in the sun.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

You that Live with the Sky

SEA-GULL swooping,
Swerving, wheeling,
You that live
With the sky for ceiling,
You know the feel of being free!
Give it to me!

You know the feel of spurning the ground!
See, I am bound.
I have a thousand bonds to hold
My feet to the ground. You fly and are bold!
I have duties and rules for chain.
You fly free in the fog and rain
And the mist and storm! Up into the sun
You fly;
And are one
With the sky!
But I—

You have the gift of being free.
Give it, just for an hour, to me!

Mary Carolyn Davies

The Blue Road

ON the Blue Road, the Sky Road
Where the lark soars and sings
God made a zone of safety
For hunted, flying things:
On the Blue Road, the Sky Road,
The Avenue of Wings.

On the Blue Road, the Sky Road,
Higher than eagles dare,
What shapes are there that challenge.
What alien wings that fare
On the Blue Road, the Far Road,
The empyreal air?

On the Blue Road, the New Road
Upspringing from the sod
They soar above the mountains
Where Moses talked with God:
On the Blue Road, the New Road
Where never foot has trod.

On the Blue Road, the Song Road,
On what quest do they roam
Ploughing the azure furrow
Breaking the clouds like loam?
On the Blue Road, the Song Road
Like homing birds they come.

May Riley Smith

Purple Grackles

THE grackles have come.
The smoothness of the morning is puckered with their incessant chatter.
A sociable lot, these purple grackles,
Thousands of them strung across a long run of wind,
Thousands of them beating the air-ways with quick wing-jerks,
Spinning down the currents of the South.
Every year they come,
My garden is a place of solace and recreation evidently,
For they always pass a day with me.
With high good nature they tell me what I do not want to hear.
The grackles have come.

I am persuaded that grackles are birds;
But when they are settled in the trees
I am inclined to declare them fruits
And the trees turned hybrid blackberry vines.
Blackness shining and bulging under leaves,
Does not that mean blackberries, I ask you?
Nonsense! The grackles have come.

Nonchalant highwaymen, pickpockets, second-story burglars,
Stealing away my little hope of Summer.
There is no stealthy robbing in this.
Who ever heard such a gabble of thieves' talk!
It seems they delight in unmasking my poor pretense.
Yes, now I see that the hydrangea blooms are rusty;
That the hearts of the golden glow are ripening to lustreless seeds;
That the garden is dahlia-coloured,
Flaming with its last over-hot hues;

That the sun is pale as a lemon too small to fill the picking-ring.
I did not see this yesterday,
But today the grackles have come.

They drop out of the trees
And strut in companies over the lawn,
Tired of flying, no doubt;
A grand parade to limber legs and give wings a rest.
I should build a great fish-pond for them,
Since it is evident that a bird-bath, meant to accommodate two gold-finches at most,
Is slight hospitality for these hordes.
Scarcely one can get in,
They all peck and scrabble so,
Crowding, pushing, chasing one another up the bank with spread wings.

"Are we ducks, you, owner of such inadequate comforts,
That you offer us lily-tanks where one must swim or drown,
Not stand and splash like a gentleman?"
I feel the reproach keenly, seeing them perch on the edges of the tanks, trying the depth with a chary foot,
And hardly able to get their wings under water in the bird-bath.
But there are resources I had not considered,
If I am bravely ruled out of count.
What is that thudding against the eaves just beyond my window?
What is that spray of water blowing past my face?
Two—three—grackles bathing in the gutter,
The gutter providentially choked with leaves.
I pray you think I put the leaves there on purpose;
I would be supposed thoughtful and welcoming

To all guests, even thieves.
But considering that they are going South and I am not,
I wish they would bathe more quietly,
It is unmannerly to flaunt one's good fortune.

They rate me of no consequence,
But they might reflect that it is my gutter.
I know their opinion of me,
Because one is drying himself on the window-sill
Not two feet from my hand.
His purple neck is sleek with water,
And the fellow preens his feathers for all the world as if
I were a fountain statue.
If it were not for the window,
I am convinced he would light on my head.
Tyrian-feathered freebooter,
Appropriating my delightful gutter with so extravagant an
ease,
You are as cool a pirate as ever scuttled a ship,
And are you not scuttling my Summer with every peck of
your sharp bill?

But there is a cloud over the beech-tree,
A quenching cloud for lemon-livered suns.
The grackles are all swinging in the tree-tops,
And the wind is coming up, mind you.
That boom and reach is no Summer gale,
I know that wind,
It blows the Equinox over seeds and scatters them,
It rips petals from petals, and tears off half-turned leaves.
There is rain on the back of that wind.
Now I would keep the grackles,
I would plead with them not to leave me.
I grant their coming, but I would not have them go.

It is a milestone, this passing of grackles.
A day of them, and it is a year gone by.
There is magic in this and terror,
But I only stare stupidly out of the window.
The grackles have come.

Come! Yes, they surely came.
But they have gone.
A moment ago the oak was full of them,
They are not there now.
Not a speck of a black wing,
Not an eye-peep of a purple head.
The grackles have gone,
And I watch an Autumn storm
Stripping the garden,
Shouting black rain challenges
To an old, limp Summer
Laid down to die in the flower-beds.

Amy Lowell

Golden Falcon

HE sees the circle of the world
Alive with wings that he
Was born to rend; his eyes are stars
Of amber cruelty.

God lit the fire in his eyes
And bound swords on his feet,
God fanned the furnace of his heart
To everlasting heat.

His two eyes take in all the sky,
East, West, North, and South,
Opposite as poles they burn;
And death is in his mouth.

Death because his Master knew
That death is last and best,
Because He gives to those He loves
The benison of rest.

Golden, cruel word of God
Written on the sky!
Living things are lovely things,
And lovely things must die.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

Sea-Gulls

THE salt sea-wind is a merry-maker,
Rippling the wild bluff's daisied reach;
The quick surf glides from the arching breaker
And foams on the tawny beach.

Out where the long reef glooms and glances
And tosses sunward its diamond rains,
Morn has pierced with her golden lances
The dizzy light-house panes.

Gladdened by sounds of infinite surges,
Heedless what billow or gale may do,
The white gulls float where the ocean-verges
Blend with a glimmer of blue.

I watch how the curtaining vapor settles
Dim on their tireless plumes far-borne,
Till faint they gleam as a blossom's petals
Blown through the spacious morn!

Edgar Fawcett

To the Man-of-War Bird

THOU who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascendest,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee),
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging, here on deck I watch thee
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all wings),
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, hadst thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

Walt Whitman

The Herald Crane

OH! say you so, bold sailor
In the sun-lit deeps of sky!
Dost thou so soon the seed-time tell
In thy imperial cry,
As circling in yon shoreless sea
Thine unseen form goes drifting by?

I cannot trace in the noon-day glare
Thy regal flight, O crane!
From the leaping might of the fiery light
Mine eyes recoil in pain,
But on mine ear, thine echoing cry
Falls like a bugle strain.

The mellow soil glows beneath my feet,
Where lies the buried grain;
The warm light floods the length and breadth
Of the vast, dim, shimmering plain,
Throbbing with heat and the nameless thrill
Of the birth-time's restless pain.

On weary wing, plebeian geese
Push on their arrowy line
Straight into the north, or snowy brant
In dazzling sunshine, gloom and shine;
But thou, O crane, save for thy sovereign cry,
At thy majestic height
On proud, extended wings sweep'st on
In lonely, easeful flight.

Then cry, thou martial-throated herald!
Cry to the sun, and sweep

And swing along thy mateless, tireless course
Above the clouds that sleep
Afloat on lazy air—cry on! Send down
Thy trumpet note—it seems
The voice of hope and dauntless will,
And breaks the spell of dreams.

Hamlin Garland

The Black Vulture

ALOOF upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm—
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

George Sterling

Barnyard Friends

Their cause I plead,—plead it in heart and mind;
A fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind.

DAVID GARRICK

Ducks

I

FROM troubles of the world
I turn to ducks,
Beautiful comical things
Sleeping or curled,
Their heads beneath white wings
By water cool,
Or finding curious things
To eat in various mucks
Beneath the pool,
Tails uppermost, or waddling
Sailor-like on the shores
Of ponds, or paddling
—Left! right!—with fanlike feet
Which are for steady oars
When they (white galleys) float
Each bird a boat,
Rippling at will the sweet
Wide waterway . . .
When night is fallen *you* creep
Upstairs, but drakes and dillies
Nest with pale water-stars,
Moonbeams and shadow bars,
And water-lilies:
Fearful too much to sleep
Since they've no locks
To click against the teeth
Of weasel and fox.
And warm beneath
Are eggs of cloudy green
Whence hungry rats and lean

Would stealthy suck
New life, but for the mien,
The bold ferocious mien
Of the mother-duck.

II

Yes, ducks are valiant things
On nests of twigs and straws,
And ducks are soothy things
And lovely on the lake
When that the sunlight draws
Thereon their pictures dim
In colors cool.
And when beneath the pool
They dabble, and when they swim
And make their rippling rings,
Oh, ducks are beautiful things!

But ducks are comical things:—
As comical as you.
Quack!
They waddle round, they do.
They eat all sorts of things,
And then they quack.
By barn and stable and stack
They wander at their will,
But if you go too near
They look at you through black
Small topaz-tinted eyes
And wish you ill.
Triangular and clear
They leave their curious track
In mud at the water's edge,
And there amid the sedge

And slime they gobble and peer
Saying "Quack! quack!"

III

When God had finished the stars and whirl of colored suns,
He turned his mind from big things to fashion little ones,
Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, and then
He made the comical ones in case the minds of men
Should stiffen and become
Dull, humorless and glum:
And so forgetful of their Maker be
As to take even themselves—*quite seriously*.
Caterpillars and cats are lively and excellent puns:
All God's jokes are good—even the practical ones!
And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit
Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it.
And He's probably laughing still at the sound that came out
of its bill!

F. W. Harvey

A Yoke of Steers

A HEAVE of mighty shoulders to the yoke,
Square, patient heads, and flaring sweep of horn;
The darkness swirling down beneath their feet
Where sleeping valleys stir, and feel the dawn;
Uncouth and primal, on and up they sway,
Taking the summit in a drench of day.
The night-winds volley upward bitter-sweet,
And the dew shatters to a rainbow spray
Under the slow-moving, cloven feet.

There is a power here that grips the mind;
A force repressed and inarticulate,
Slow as the swing of centuries, as blind
As destiny, and as deliberate.

They will arrive in their appointed hour
Unhurried by the goad of lesser wills,
Bearing vast burdens on.
They are the great
Unconquerable spirit of these hills.

Du Bose Heyward

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The Hens

THE night was coming very fast;
It reached the gate as I ran past.

The pigeons had gone to the tower of the church
And all the hens were on their perch,

Up in the barn, and I thought I heard
A piece of little purring word.

I stopped inside, waiting and staying,
To try to hear what the hens were saying.

They were asking something, that was plain,
Asking it over and over again.

One of them moved and turned around,
Her feathers made a ruffled sound,

A ruffled sound, like a bushful of birds,
And she said her little asking words.

She pushed her head close into her wing,
But nothing answered anything.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

The Kerry Cow

IT'S in Connacht in Munster that yourself might travel wide,
And be asking all the herds you'd meet along the country-side,
But you'd never meet a one could show the likes of her till now,
Where she's grazing in a Leinster field—my little Kerry cow.

If herself went to the cattle fairs she'd put all cows to shame,
For the finest poets of the land would meet to sing her fame;
And the young girls would be asking leave to stroke her satin coat,
They'd be praising and caressing her, and calling her a dote.

If the King of Spain gets news of her he'll fill his purse with gold,
And set sail to ask the English King where she is to be sold.
But the King of Spain may come to me, a crown upon his brow.
It is he may keep his golden purse—and I my Kerry cow.

The priest maybe will tell her fame to the Holy Pope of Rome,
And the Cardinals' College send for her to leave her Irish home;
But it's heart-broke she would be itself to cross the Irish sea,
'Twould be best they'd send a blessing to my Kerry cow and me.

When the Ulster men hear tell of her, they'll come with swords an' pikes,

For it's civil war there'll be no less if they should see her likes,
And you'll read it on the paper of the bloody fight there's been,
An' the Orangemen they're burying in the fields of Leinster green.

There are red cows that's contrary, and there's white cows quare and wild,
But my Kerry cow is biddable, an' gentle as a child.
You may rare up kings and heroes on the lovely milk she yields,
For she's fit to foster generals to fight our battle fields.

In the histories they'll be making they've a right to put her name
With the horse of Troy and Oisin's hounds and other beasts of fame.
And the painters will be painting her beneath the hawthorn bough
Where she's grazing on the good green grass—my little Kerry cow.

Winifred M. Letts

Lamb

THE old bellwether
looked at the lamb,
as a gentleman looks
when he mutters "Damn!"

"If you jump and frisk,
you little fool,
you'll only end
by losing your wool.

When I was a lamb
I always would
behave as like a sheep
as I could."

"Did you!" the lamb
replied with a leap,
"I always thought
You were born a sheep."

The park-keeper said
to the boy on the fence,
"Let's have less
of your impudence!

Off with you now,
and do as you're bade,
or you'll end in prison.
When I was a lad . . ."

Humbert Wolfe

A Prayer

THINE are the cattle on a thousand hills,
So saith the Word Divine;
And all the beasts that every forest fills,
Each one is Thine.

But Thou hast given to men the power
To capture them and tame,
To use them for their service hour by hour,
Call them by name.

Some of Thy creatures, in this time of strife,
Fight side by side with man;
And many a horse and dog gives up his life,
Does all he can.

O Thou who lovest all that Thou hast made,
Who madest great and small,
Hear us Thy servants, who are not afraid
To pray for all.

For men who fight we pray in our distress,
'Tis all that we can do:
And kneeling down, we ask:—"O Father, bless
The dumb beasts too!"

C. S. Purves

The Duck and the Kangaroo

SAID the Duck to the Kangaroo,
"Good gracious! how you hop
Over the fields, and the water too,
As if you never would stop!
My life is a bore in this nasty pond;
And I long to go out in the world beyond:
I wish I could hop like you,"
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.

"Please give me a ride on your back,"
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo:
"I would sit quite still, and say nothing but 'Quack'
The whole of the long day through:
And we'd go to the Dee and the Jelly Bo Lee,
Over the land, and over the sea:
Please take me a ride! oh, do!"
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.

Said the Kangaroo to the Duck,
"This requires some little reflection.
Perhaps, on the whole, it might bring me luck:
And there seems but one objection;
Which is, if you'll let me speak so bold,
Your feet are unpleasantly wet and cold,
And would probably give me the roo-
Matiz," said the Kangaroo.

Said the Duck, "As I sat on the rocks,
I have thought over that completely;
And I bought four pairs of worsted socks,
Which fit my web-feet neatly;

And, to keep out the cold, I've bought a cloak,
And every day a cigar I'll smoke;
All to follow my own dear true
Love of a Kangaroo."

Said the Kangaroo, "I'm ready,
All in the moonlight pale;
But to balance me well, dear Duck, sit steady,
And quite at the end of my tail."
So away they went with a hop and a bound;
And they hopped the whole world three times round.
And who so happy, ho! who,
As the Duck and the Kangaroo.

Edward Lear

The Fowls

BLACK hens, white hens, speckled hens and brown,
Clucking in the sunshine, strutting up and down;
Very vain and happy they, for were the truth but known,
Each thinks the loudest cackle in the farm-yard is her own,
And each declares the egg she's left behind her in the nest
Is bigger and much better than the eggs of all the rest.
"Cackle-cackle! Cluck-a-cluck!
Cock-a-doodle-doo!
The cock is king of Farm-yard Land,
But I am queen there, too."

White hens, brown hens, speckled hens and black,
With lots of little yellow chicks a-toddling at their back;
Father Cock must come and look, his red comb on his head;
"Cheep at him, my pretties! Sir, be careful how you tread!
Now are they not a lovely brood? Just see them peck and run;
And see how my two soft warm wings will cover every one.
Cackle-cackle! Cheepie-cheep!
Ah, cock-a-doodle-doo,
Although you're king of Farm-yard Land
I'm prouder far than you!"

M. Nightingale

Cock-a-Doodle-Doo

MY neighbor has a herd, my neighbor has a flock,
But I have a barn with a gilt weathercock.

I have no horses, I have no hay,
But I have a weathercock, gilt and gay.

My neighbor has a flock, my neighbor has a herd,
But I have a beautiful bright tin bird.

And when I am dead, this will be said:
He had a weathercock on his shed;

He had no herd, he had no flock,
But he had a barn with a gilt weathercock;

He had no horses, he had no hay,
But he had a weathercock, gilt and gay;

His neighbor had a flock, his neighbor had a herd,
But he had a beautiful bright tin bird!

Richard R. Kirk

Duck's Ditty

ALL along the backwater,
Through the rushes tall,
Ducks are a-dabbling,
Up tails all!

Ducks' tails, drakes' tails,
Yellow feet a-quiver,
Yellow birds all out of sight
Busy in the river!

Slushy green undergrowth
Where the roach swim—
Here we keep our larder
Cool and full and dim!

Every one for what he likes!
We like to be
Heads down, tails up,
Dabbling free!

High in the blue above
Swifts whirl and call—
We are down a-dabbling,
Up tails all!

Kenneth Grahame

Sheep

HUDDLED, rain-drenched, forlorn they stood,
Their fleeces blown one way;
The wet wind cried in solitude
About the failing day.

Leaves whirled below, aloft; the sky
Sagged like a sodden shroud;
No stir of life, no pleading cry,
Came from the draggled crowd.

Sudden the western portals wide
Opened on that gaunt fold;
Then lo, a flock beatified
With fleeces dripping gold!

C. Kenneth Burrow

The Wren and the Hen

SAID a very small wren
To a very large hen:
"Pray, why do you make such a clatter?
I never could guess
Why an egg, more or less,
Should be thought so important a matter."

Then answered the hen
To the very small wren:
"If I laid such small eggs as you, madam,
I would not cluck loud,
Nor would I feel proud.
Look at these! How *you'd* crow if you had 'em!"

Unknown

Four Ducks on a Pond

FOUR ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing—
What a little thing
To remember for years!
To remember with tears!

William Allingham

Chanticleer

OF all the birds from East to West
That tuneful are and dear,
I love that farmyard bird the best,
They call him Chanticleer.

Gold plume and copper plume,
Comb of scarlet gay;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
And whistles back the day!

He is the sun's brave herald
That, ringing his blithe horn,
Calls round a world dew-pearled
The heavenly airs of morn.

O clear gold, shrill and bold!
He calls through creeping mist
The mountains from the night and cold
To rose and amethyst.

He sets the birds to singing,
And calls the flowers to rise;
The morning cometh, bringing
Sweet sleep to heavy eyes.

Gold plume and silver plume,
Comb of coral gay;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
And summons home the day!

Black fear he sends it flying,
Black care he drives afar;

And creeping shadows sighing
Before the morning star.

The birds of all the forest
Have dear and pleasant cheer,
But yet I hold the rarest
The farmyard Chanticleer.

Red cock or black cock,
Gold cock or white,
The flower of all the feathered flock,
He whistles back the light!

Katherine Tynan-Hinkson

The Sheep

"IF you want your wool
to be beautiful,
soft as silk,
and white as milk,
you'd better keep
to the country, sheep.

For here in the Gardens
wool blackens and hardens."
"But what would Boy Blue
of Kensington do
if he woke from his sleep,
and we'd gone?" say the sheep.

"He's never been
in the far cool green,
he's never known,
when the corn has grown,
how the poppies sweep
through the gold," say the sheep.

"We're all that he ever
will have of river,
midday shadows,
cowslip meadows,
and the morning cheep
of birds," say the sheep.

"For him and Bo-Peep
of the slums," say the sheep,
"we'll stay. So never mind us;
leave us alone,
and we'll come home
with our country tales behind us."

Humbert Wolfe

Cattle Before the Storm

ABOUT the water hole, half dried,
The restless cattle weary eyed,
Watching dark omens in the skies,
Stir up the choking dust that settles
Upon them with the flies
That sting like nettles.

No shelter lifts where they may go.
Far hazy hills in ragged row
Are out where trails on distance break;
And cattle group and mill together
With rumps now hunched to take
The lashing weather.

Sparse pasture cannot lure them back
Along the plain while lightnings crack
Long whips of flame the clouds writhe from.
Though something tells them to beware it,
The cattle tense and dumb
Must stay and bear it.

Glenn Ward Dresbach

The Cattle Train

BELOW my window goes the cattle train,
And stands for hours along the river park,
Fear, Cold, Exhaustion, Hunger, Thirst, and Pain;
Dumb brutes we call them—Hark!

The bleat of frightened mother-calling young,
Deep-throated agony, shrill frantic cries,
Hoarse murmur of the thirst-distended tongue,
Up to my window rise.

Bleak lies the shore to northern wind and sleet,
In open-slatted cars they stand and freeze;
Beside the broad blue river in the heat
All waterless go these.

Hot, fevered, frightened, trampled, bruised, and torn,
Frozen to death before the ax descends,
We kill these weary creatures, sore and worn.
And eat them—with our friends.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Little Brothers of the Ground

Write on my grave when I am dead,
Whatever road I trod,
That I admired and honorèd
The wondrous works of God.

KATHERINE TYNAN-HINKSON

Little Brothers of the Ground

LITTLE ants in leafy wood,
Bound by gentle Brotherhood,
While ye gaily spoil,
Men are ground by the wheel of toil;
While ye follow Blessed Fates,
Men are shriveled up with hates;
Or they lie with sheeted Lust,
And they eat the bitter dust.

Ye are fraters in your hall,
Gay and chainless, great and small;
All are toilers in the field,
All are sharers in the yield.
But we mortals plot and plan
How to grind the fellow-man,
Glad to find him in a pit,
If we get some gain of it.
So with us, the sons of Time,
Labor is a kind of crime,
For the toilers have the least,
While the idlers lord the feast.
Yes, our workers they are bound,
Pallid captives to the ground,
Jeered by traitors, fooled by knaves,
Till they tumble into graves.

How appears to tiny eyes
All this wisdom of the wise?

Edwin Markham

The Lament of the Mole-Catcher

AN old, sad man who catches moles
Went lonely down the lane—
All lily-green were the lanes and knolls
But sorrow numbed his brain.
He paid no heed to flower or weed
As he went his lonely way.
No note he heard from any bird
That sang that sad spring day.

"I trapp'd the moles for forty years,
Who could not see the sky,
I reckoned not blind blood or tears,
And the Lord has seen them die.
For forty years I've sought to slay
The small, the dumb, the blind,
But now the Lord has made me pay,
And I am like their kind.
I cannot see or lane or hill,
Or flower or bird or moon;
Lest life shall lay me lower still,
O Lord—come take it soon."

Osbert Sitwell

Cricket

CRICKET, chirring in the autumn twilight,
Little kinsman,
I, like you, the unknown path must follow
Into darkness.
Would I might, with your ecstatic buoyance,
Fare forth singing!

Clinton Scollard

A Centipede

A CENTIPEDE was happy quite,
Until a frog in fun
Said, "Pray, which leg comes after which?"
This raised her mind to such a pitch,
She lay distracted in the ditch,
Considering how to run.

Unknown

Remonstrance with the Snails

YE little snails,
With slippery tails,
Who noiselessly travel
Along this gravel,
By a silvery path of slime unsightly,
I learn that you visit my pea-rows nightly.
Felonious your visit, I guess!
And I give you this warning,
That, every morning,
I'll strictly examine the pods;
And if one I hit on,
With slaver or spit on,
Your next meal will be with the gods.

I own you're a very ancient race,
And Greece and Babylon were amid:
You have tenanted many a royal dome,
And dwelt in the oldest pyramid.
The source of the Nile!—Oh, you have been there,
In the ark was your floodless bed;
On the moonless night of Marathon
You crawled o'er the mighty dead;
But still, though I reverence your ancestries,
I don't see why you should nibble my peas.

The meadows are yours—the hedgerow and brook,
You may bathe in their dews at morn;
By the aged sea you may sound your *shells,*
On the mountains erect your *horn:*
The fruits and the flowers are your rightful dowers,
Then why—in the name of wonder—

Should my six pea-rows be the only cause
To excite your midnight plunder?

I have never disturbed your slender shells;
You have hung round my aged walk;
And each might have sat, till he died in his fat,
Beneath his own cabbage-stalk.
But now you must fly from the soil of your sires;
Then put on your liveliest crawl,
And think of your poor little snails at home,
Now orphans or emigrants all.

Utensils domestic and civil and social
I give you an evening to pack up;
But if the moon of this night does not rise on your flight,
To-morrow I'll hang each man Jack up.
You'll think of my peas and your thievish tricks,
With tears of slime, when crossing the *Styx*.

Unknown

The Grasshopper and the Cricket

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass.

Oh, sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song—
Indoors and out, summer and winter, mirth.

Leigh Hunt

To a Wood-Rat

Whose home was destroyed by a class in Zoölogy

OCH, it pulls at me heart to see you afflicted,
You with th' great, sobbin' eyes of ye there;
Could the Irish stand by to see one evicted
An' say, "I don't care?"

You that have labored your home to be earnin',
You've toiled in th' buildin' be day an' be night.
Now they've pulled it apart for th' sake of their learnin'—
God send thim light!

James Leo Duff

The Study of a Spider

FROM holy flower to holy flower
Thou weavest thine unhallowed bower:
The harmless dewdrops, beaded thin,
Ripple along thy ropes of sin.
Thy house a grave, a gulf thy throne
Affright the fairies every one.
The winding-sheets are grey and fell,
Imprisoning with nets of Hell
The lovely births that winnow by,
Winged sisters of the rainbow sky—
Elf-darlings, fluffy, bee-bright things,
And owl-white moths with mealy wings,
And tiny flies, as gauzy thin
As ever were shut electrum in.
These are thy death spoils, insect ghoul,
With their dear life thy fangs are foul.
Thou felon anchorite of pain
Who sittest in a world of slain;
Hermit, who tunest song unsweet
To heaving wind and writhing feet;
A glutton of creation's sighs,
Miser of many miseries;
Toper, whose lonely feasting chair
Sways in inhospitable air.
The board is bare, the bloated host
Drinks to himself toast after toast.
His lip requires no goblet brink,
But like a weasel must he drink.
The vintage is as old as time
And bright as sunset, pressed and prime.
Ah, venom mouth and shaggy thighs
And paunch grown sleek with sacrifice,
The dolphin back and shoulders round,

Coarse-hairy, as some goblin hound
Whom a hag rides to Sabbath on,
While shuddering stars in fear grow wan.
Thou palace priest of treachery,
Thou type of selfish lechery,
I break the toils around thy head
And from thy gibbets take thy dead.

Lord de Tabley

The Snail

VEINED and lustrous, ringed with pearl and azure,
With amber flecked, and orange and black,
Marvellous is the house of his abiding,
The curved, frail mansion on his glistening back.

Trekking from clump to clump of yellowing grasses,
On yielding mounds of pale, wind-patterned sand,
He leaves a path of silver as the night falls
And the grey twilight wavers from the land.

Then the salt spray from seaward, the moon shining
Through crystalline beads of dew on root and stem;
Beetles and worms and fluttering moths and spiders,
Blind, thrusting moles, and blind bats over them.

He goes his way, with quivering horns advancing
To green, alluring grasses, gravely intent,
Shrinking when rabbits scurry past to warren
And foxes sidle by with careless scent.

Dawn shows an oasis of grass and nettles;
In viscous joy he feeds and climbs and clings. . . .
His house is ringed with azure, pearl and amber,
Perched high in leafage where the young sap sings.

William Kean Seymour

Grasshopper

HOW did I know that though needy at first
You grew and grew till your waistcoat burst?
And you gobbled it up— But still you grew,
So you gobbled your coat and your breeches too—
How did I know? How did I know?
Flibberty-gibbety Jump-Jim-Crow.

How did I know that your ting-a-ling-ling
Was fiddle an' scrape of your shin an' your wing?
How did I know that you managed to hear
Through a hole in your side, for you hadn't an ear?
How did I know? How did I know?
Flibberty-gibbety Jump-Jim-Crow.

How did I know that the strength of your thighs
Was such a remarkable one, for your size,
That if you were only as big as a mouse
You'd think very little of jumping a house?
How did I know? How did I know?
Flibberty-gibbety Jump-Jim-Crow.

Douglas English

Toad

I'M just about the color of mud,
I've a bobby mouth and a knobby back;
I bundle away, I tumble and thud,
I lack the knack of walking a crack.

I sit and think at the chink of my hole—
Nothing like flies for a plump, buff belly—
I rather reckon I haven't any soul,
Though I'm not altogether pebbles and jelly.

As soon as the roses I smell the rain,
I wink one eye when two wouldn't do;
I pad my ribs, and I don't complain.
I'm toad, but no toady— How about you?

John Vance Cheney

The Snake

A NARROW fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him—did you not,
His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen;
And then it closes at your feet
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,
A floor too cool for corn.
Yet when a child, and barefoot,
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash
Unbraiding in the sun—
When, stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me;
I feel for them a transport
Of cordiality;

But I never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone.

Emily Dickinson

The Frogs' Singing-School

DOWN in the rushes beside the pool,
The frogs were having a singing-school;
Old frogs, young frogs, tadpoles and all,
Doing their best at their leader's call.
He waved a grass-blade high in the air,
And cried, "Ker-chunk!" which means "Prepare!"
But the youngest singer took up the strain,
And sang, "Ker-chunk!" with might and main.
The others followed as he sang;
"Ker-chunk!" their voices loudly rang,
Until their leader so angry grew
He snapped his baton quite in two,
And croaked, "Oh, wro-ong! oh, wro-ong! oh, wro-ong!"
Which his class mistook for another song.
At that, their leader hopped away—
"Ker-chunk! oh, wro-ong!" I heard him say.
Then flop! he went, right into the pool.
And that was the end of the singing-school.

E. T. Corbell

The Frog, the Crab, and the Limpsy Eel

A FROG, a crab, and a limpsy eel
Agreed to run a race.
The frog leaped so far he lost his way,
And tumbled on his face.
The crab went well, but quite forgot
To go ahead as he went,
And so crawled backward every step,
On winning the race intent.
And the limpsy eel, he curled and curled,
And waved to left and right,
Till the crab came backing the other way,
And the frog jumped past them quite.
And when last I looked, the limpsy eel
Was curling himself apace,
The frog had tangled his two hind legs,
And the crab had won the race!

Mary Mapes Dodge

The Crickets

PIPE, little minstrels of the waning year,
In thy gentle concert pipe!
Pipe the warm noons; the mellow harvest near;
The apples dropping ripe;

The tempered sunshine and the softened shade;
The trill of lonely bird;
The sweet sad hush on Nature's gladness laid;
The sounds through silence heard!

Pipe tenderly the passing of the year;
The summer's brief reprieve;
The dry husk rustling round the yellow ear;
The chill of morn and eve!

Pipe the untroubled trouble of the year;
Pipe low the painless pain;
Pipe your unceasing melancholy cheer;
The year is in the wane.

Harriet McEwen Kimball

Trebizond, Jonah and the Minnows

THREE fishermen
fished in the old Round Pond.
One fished
for fishes of Trebizond—

golden fishes
with open mouth
stuffed with spice out of
the East and the South.

(He caught nothing.)
The second fished
for the sort of whale
in which Jonah swished

through the pale green seas
of the Bible—flup!
Before Jonah was ready
he'd coughed him up.

(He caught nothing.)
The third with string
hopefully fished
for anything.

Like flourishes made
with a thick nibbed pen,
the minnows swam up
and swam off again.

And would it surprise you
to learn that the three
ridiculous fishermen
all were me?

Humbert Wolfe

Grasshopper Green

GRASSHOPPER GREEN is a comical chap;
He lives on the best of fare.
Bright little trousers, jacket and cap,
These are his summer wear.
Out in the meadow he loves to go,
Playing away in the sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low—
Summer's the time for fun.

Grasshopper Green has a dozen wee boys,
And soon as their legs grow strong,
Each of them joins in his frolicsome joys,
Singing his merry song.
Under the hedge in a happy row
Soon as the day has begun,
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low—
Summer's the time for fun.

Grasshopper Green has a quaint little house.
It's under the hedge so gay.
Grandmother Spider, as still as a mouse,
Watches him over the way.
Gladly he's calling the children, I know,
Out in the beautiful sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low—
Summer's the time for fun.

Unknown

Crickets at Dawn

ALL night the crickets chirp,
Like little stars of twinkling sound
In the dark silence.

They sparkle through the summer stillness
With a crisp rhythm:
They lift the shadows on their tiny voices.

But at the shining note of birds that wake,
Flashing from tree to tree till all the wood is lit—

O golden coloratura of dawn!—
The cricket-stars fade slowly,
One by one.

Leonora Speyer

The Cricket

THE twilight is the morning of his day,
While sleep drops seaward from the fading shore,
With purpling sail and dip of silver oar,
He cheers the shadowed time with roundelay,
Until the dark east softens into gray.
Now as the noisy hours are coming—hark!
His song dies gently—it is growing dark—
His night, with its one star, is on its way!

Faintly the light breaks o'er the blowing oats—
Sleep, little brother, sleep: I am astir,
We worship Song, and servants are of Her—
I in the bright hours, thou in shadow-time;
Lead thou the starlit night with merry notes,
And I will lead the clamoring day with rhyme.

Edwin Markham

A Toad

BLUE dusk, that brings the dewy hours,
Brings thee, of graceless form in sooth,
Dark stumbler at the roots of flowers,
Flaccid, inert, uncouth.

Right ill can human wonder guess
Thy meaning or thy mission here,
Gray lump of mottled clamminess,
With that preposterous leer!

But when I meet thy dull bulk where
Luxurious roses bend and burn,
Or some slim lily lifts to air
Its frail and fragrant urn,

Of these, among the garden-ways,
So grim a watcher dost thou seem,
That I, with meditative gaze,
Look down on thee and dream

Of thick-lipped slaves, with ebon skin,
That squat in hideous dumb repose,
And guard the drowsy ladies in
Their still seraglios!

Edgar Fawcett

The Beetle

THE shrilling locust slowly sheathes
His dagger-voice, and creeps away
Beneath the brooding leaves where breathes
The zephyr of the dying day:
One naked star has waded through
The purple shallows of the night,
And faltering as falls the dew
It drips its misty light.
O'er garden-blooms,
On tides of musk,
The beetle booms adown the glooms
And bumps along the dusk.

The katydid is rasping at
The silence from the tangled broom:
On drunken wings the flitting bat
Goes staggering athwart the gloom:
The toadstool bulges through the weeds;
And lavishly to left and right
The fire-flies, like golden seeds,
Are sown about the night.
O'er slumbrous blooms,
On floods of musk,
The beetle booms adown the glooms
And bumps along the dusk.

The primrose flares its baby-hands
Wide open, as the empty moon,
Slow lifted from the underlands,
Drifts up the azure-arched lagoon:
The shadows on the garden walk
Are frayed with rifts of silver light;
And, trickling down the poppy-stalk,

The dewdrop streaks the night.
O'er folded blooms,
On swirls of musk,
The beetle booms adown the glooms
And bumps along the dusk.

James Whitcomb Riley

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The Cricket

HARK to the fairy linnet—
How reticent he sings!
Sings—stops; then, in a minute,
He'll re-begin it,
Then stop again.

The sunset is his dawn:
When day is over,
He pipes a delicate strain
Beneath the tiger-lilies by the lawn,
Or, from the top boughs of the tallest clover
Outpours his Lilliputian carollings.

Percy MacKaye

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The Lizard

I SIT among the hoary trees
With Aristotle on my knees,
And turn with serious hand the pages,
Lost in the cobweb-hush of ages;
When suddenly with no more sound
Than any sunbeam on the ground,
The little hermit of the place
Is peering up into my face—
The slim gray hermit of the rocks,
With bright inquisitive, quick eyes,
His life a round of harks and shocks,
A little ripple of surprise.

Now lifted up, intense and still,
Sprung from the silence of the hill
He hangs upon the ledge a-glisten,
And his whole body seems to listen!
My pages give a little start,
And he is gone! to be a part
Of the old cedar's crumpled bark,
A mottled-scar, a weather-mark!

How halt am I, how mean of birth,
Beside this darting pulse of earth!
I only have the wit to look
Into a big presumptuous book,
To find some sage's rigid plan
To tell me how to be a man.
Tradition lays its dead hand cold
Upon our youth—and we are old.
But this wise hermit, this gray friar,
He has no law but heart's desire.
He somehow touches higher truth,
The circle of eternal youth.

Edwin Markham

To a Tree-Frog

LITTLE enchanted leaf,
Apart from the tree yet of it,
The magic of water made you
That so you love it;
The brook gave you a voice,
Dew drops your eyes,
Your little watery soul
From a mist did rise;
And so you're ever trilling,
While rain is rilling,
For sheer delight
In its wetness bright,—
And so you're ever crooning
With muted glee
While the wind his harp is tuning
To a higher key,
For well you know
When he doth so,
Full soon he'll strike the chord of power
That brings a shower,
And while the rain is rilling
Again you will be trilling;—

"Tree! Tree! Tree!
Dr-rink! Dr-rink!
Creek! Creek! Creek!
Br-rim a-br-rink!
Dr-r-r-ops in millions,
Billions, tr-r-rillions!"

It is easy to be
A little green frog on a tree
When rain is rilling,
When summer showers are shrilling.

Amélie Rives

Little Snail

I SAW a little snail
Come down the garden walk.
He wagged his head this way . . . that way . . .
Like a clown in a circus.
He looked from side to side
As though he were from a different country.
I have always said he carries his house on his back . . .
To-day in the rain
I saw it was his umbrella!

Hilda Conkling

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The Caterpillar

UNDER this loop of honeysuckle,
A creeping, coloured caterpillar,
I gnaw the fresh green hawthorn spray,
I nibble it leaf by leaf away.

Down beneath grow dandelions,
Daisies, old-man's-looking-glasses;
Rooks flap croaking across the lane.
I eat and swallow and eat again.

Here come raindrops helter-skelter;
I munch and nibble unregarding:
Hawthorn leaves are juicy and firm.
I'll mind my business: I'm a good worm.

When I'm old, tired, melancholy,
I'll build a leaf-green mausoleum
Close by, here on this lovely spray,
And die and dream the ages away.

Some say worms win resurrection,
With white wings beating flitter-flutter,
But wings or a sound sleep, why should I care?
Either way I'll miss my share.

Under this loop of honeysuckle,
A hungry, hairy caterpillar,
I crawl on my high and swinging seat,
And eat, eat, eat—as one ought to eat.

Robert Graves

To Tree-Crickets

CONSTANT mites that briskly whip
One measure over and over,
How like you are, a-harping there,
The larger sort of lover.

Scratch-scratch, scratch-scratch, all the night,
You twang it, brave and cheery;
One jerky stave, the whole night long,—
Deary—Deary—Deary.

High the moon rides, high and clear,
The filling dewdrops glisten;
Thrum, plucky lovers! well I know
Your little ladies listen.

Stick to 't, wooers! So will I,
Nor ever slightest vary
The one sweet word of all the world,—
Mary—Mary—Mary.

John Vance Cheney

The Caterpillar

BROWN and furry
Caterpillar, in a hurry
Take your walk
To the shady leaf or stalk
Or what not,
Which may be the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.

Christina Rossetti

The Katydid

THOU husky raven of the insect race,
Who hintest—hid by darkness from espial—
Of some poor maid's disgrace,
Cease this asseveration and denial!
Whatever the black blame, will it abate it
Thus to incessant rasp and iterate it?
If Katy *did* the dark deed, let *her* state it!

Percy MacKaye

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Wings and Stings

The least and last of things
That soar on quivering wings,
Or crowd among the grass-blades out of sight,
Have just as clear a right
To their appointed portion of delight
As queens or kings.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Conclave

I SHOULD attend the conclave of the bees
And agile butterflies if I would know
All of the golden summer secrecies
That now elude me and evade me so.

I should be friendly with the dragon-flies,
And make the cricket my close intimate;
I should be listening when the hyla cries,
And hark the shrill cicada at my gate.

I should be present where wasps build their nests
Beneath old granary eaves—observe the whir
Of shadowy moths when twilight veils the crests,
And follow the spry vaulting grasshopper.

If I would solve sweet summer's secrecies
I should attend all conclaves such as these.

Clinton Scollard

A More Ancient Mariner

THE swarthy bee is a buccaneer,
A burly velveted rover,
Who loves the booming wind in his ear
As he sails the seas of clover.

A waif of the goblin pirate crew,
With not a soul to deplore him,
He steers for the open verge of blue
With the filmy world before him.

. . . . . .

He harries the ports of the Hollyhocks,
And levies on poor Sweetbrier;
He drinks the whitest wine of Phlox,
And the Rose is his desire.

He hangs in the Willows a night and a day;
He rifles the Buckwheat patches;
Then battens his store of pelf galore
Under the tautest hatches.

He wooes the Poppy and weds the Peach,
Inveigles Daffodilly,
And then like a tramp abandons each
For the gorgeous Canada Lily.

. . . . . .

He dares to boast, along the coast,
The beauty of Highland Heather,—
How he and she, with night on the sea,
Lay out on the hills together.

He pilfers from every port of the wind,
From April to golden autumn;

But the thieving ways of his mortal days
Are those his mother taught him.

. . . . . .

He never could box the compass round;
He doesn't know port from starboard;
But he knows the gates of the Sundown Straits,
Where the choicest goods are harboured.

He never could see the Rule of Three,
But he knows a rule of thumb
Better than Euclid's, better than yours,
Or the teachers' yet to come.

. . . . . .

He drones along with his rough sea-song
And the throat of a salty tar,
This devil-may-care, till he makes his lair
By the light of a yellow star.

He looks like a gentleman, lives like a lord,
And works like a Trojan hero;
Then loafs all winter upon his hoard,
With the mercury at zero.

Bliss Carman

The Butterfly

I HOLD you at last in my hand,
Exquisite child of the air.
Can I ever understand
How you grew to be so fair?

You came to my linden tree
To taste its delicious sweet,
I sitting here in the shadow and shine
Playing around its feet.

Now I hold you fast in my hand,
You marvelous butterfly,
Till you help me to understand
The eternal mystery.

From that creeping thing in the dust
To this shining bliss in the blue!
God give me courage to trust
I can break my chrysalis too!

Alice Freeman Palmer

To a Bee

HITHER, meadow gossip, tell me,
Will you never pause to rest?
From the gray of dawn I've watched you,
Till the sun has burned the west;
Seen you whisper to the gentian
What you heard upon the wheat;
And the flowers nod in laughter
At the stories you repeat.

Long and vainly have I listened
To discover what you said,
What you murmured to the daisies,
To the clovers white and red;
And I saw you, after prowling
Where the columbines were hid,
Set the apple blossoms blushing—
Yes, you shocking wretch, you did.

Buttercups and dandelions
Show you yellow heaps of gold,
Just to harken to your chatter
And the scandals you unfold;
Even Jack within his pulpit,
Priestly rascal, likes to hear
Things about his congregation
That should hurt a saintly ear.

And lest any of your items
Through the day should be forgot,
I believe you always write them
On the dim forget-me-not.
If I trust you with a secret

Far more precious, little bee,
Will you tell me on the morrow
If my sweetheart thinks of me!

Gentle tattler, I must love you,
Though you have a meddling way;
And I would that human gossips
Had the wisdom you display,
And could, leaving all the slanders
And the meanness they must meet,
Journey homeward in the gloaming
Bringing only what is sweet.

H. Prescott Beach

The Butterfly

O WINGED brother on the harebell, stay—
Was God's hand very pitiful, the hand
That wrought thy beauty at a dream's demand?
Yes, knowing I love so well the flowery way,
He did not fling me to the world astray—
He did not drop me to the weary sand,
But bore me gently to a leafy land:
Tinting my wings, He gave me to the day.

Oh, chide no more my doubting, my despair!
I will go back now to the world of men.
Farewell, I leave thee to the world of air,
Yet thou hast girded up my heart again;
For He that framed the impenetrable plan,
And keeps His word with thee, will keep with man.

Edwin Markham

The Shining Web

A HUNGRY spider made a web
Of thread so very fine,
Your tiny fingers scarce could feel
The little slender line.
Round about and round about,
And round about it spun;
Straight across and back again,
Until the web was done.

Oh, what a pretty, shining web
It was when it was done!
The little flies all came to see
It hanging in the sun.
Round about and round about,
And round about they danced;
Across the web and back again,
They darted and they glanced.

The hungry spider saw and watched
The happy little flies;
It saw all round about its head—
It had so many eyes.
Round about and round about,
And round about they go;
Across the web and back again,
Now high again, now low.

"I am hungry, very hungry,"
Said the spider to the fly;
"If you would come into my house,
We'd eat some, you and I."
But round about and round about,

And round about once more;
Across the web and back again,
They flitted as before.

For all the flies were much too wise
To venture near the spider;
They flapped their little wings and flew
In circles rather wider.
Round about and round about,
And round about went they;
Across the web and back again,
And then they flew away.

Unknown

Butterfly

BUTTERFLY,
I like the way you wear your wings.
Show me their colors,
For the light is going.
Spread out their edges of gold,
Before the Sandman puts me to sleep
And evening murmurs by.

Hilda Conkling

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Ministering Bees

THINK you this topaz powder on the bee
Is accidental, frail or fugitive?
That its sole mission, bumping joyously,
Is for the sweetness that the flowers give?

Such noisy busybodies! See the horde
That riotously swarms, unsatisfied
That each ambrosial storehouse is explored
And every blossom's treasury well pried.

Not frail nor fugitive this tawny dust
Twinkling on antlered head and brittle wings.
It is the vital element that must
Make fertile through predestined scatterings
My cucumbers. Wise Æsculapian bees,
Not merely honey-drunken debauchees!

Virginia McCormick

The Wasp

WHEN the ripe pears droop heavily,
The yellow wasp hums loud and long
His hot and drowsy autumn song:
A yellow flame he seems to be,
When darting suddenly from high
He lights where fallen peaches lie.

Yellow and black—this tiny thing's
A tiger-soul on elfin wings.

William Sharp

The Example

HERE'S an example from
A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

William H. Davies

The Jester and the Butterflies

FAIR elves of frolic, dancers of the air,
Gay pirouetters in the noonday sun,
Blithe summer nurslings with your lives soon done,
Would I might all of your abandon share!
You know not age; 'tis never yours with spare
And tottering Decrepitude to shun
The primrose pathways that Youth smiles upon,
Who are like Youth forever debonair.

Thus would I fain adventure; have my day
Bright in the splendid sunlight; never feel
The clutching cold that lies in wait for Age;
Trip to the summer's jocund roundelay
The madsomest, the merriest, then steal
Sudden and swift from off life's comic stage!

Clinton Scollard

Fireflies

I SAW, one sultry night, above a swamp,
The darkness throbbing with their golden pomp!

And long my dazzled sight did they entrance
With the weird chaos of their dizzy dance!

Quicker than yellow leaves, when gales despoil,
Quivered the brilliance of their mute turmoil,

Within whose light was intricately blent
Perpetual rise, perpetual descent,

As though their scintillant flickerings had met
In the vague meshes of some airy net!

And now mysteriously I seemed to guess,
While watching their tumultuous loveliness,

What fervor of deep passion strangely thrives
In the warm richness of these tropic lives,

Whose wings can never tremble but they show
These hearts of living fire that beat below!

Edgar Fawcett

The Humble-bee

BURLY, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June;
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum,—
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And, with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a color of romance,
And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple sap and daffodels,
Grass with green flag and half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All besides was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fireflies

LITTLE lamps of the dusk,
You fly low and gold
When the summer evening
Starts to unfold,

So that all the insects
Now, before you pass,
Will have light to see by
Undressing in the grass.

But when Night has flowered,
Little lamps agleam,
You fly over tree-tops
Following a dream.

Men wonder from their windows
That a firefly goes so far—
They do not know your longing
To be a shooting star.

Carolyn Hall

Old Friends

OH, sure am I when come to die,
And through Death's portals go,
Those cats, and dogs, and little white mice,
And birds, I used to know,
Shall all come rushing to welcome me,
Their friend of the long ago.

And the cats will purr, "We've missed you, sir,
And we know you missed us too."
And the dogs will bark, "Good morning, friend,
We've waited long for you."
And the little white mice shall squeak with joy,
And the birds will chirp and coo.

And happen what may on the Judgment Day,
I shall not affrighted be,
If the cats and dogs, and all weak dumb things
That on earth were dear to see,
Should receive from God the gift of speech,
For I know they'll plead for me.

A. MUIR

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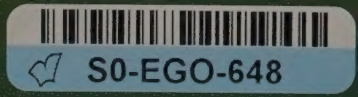
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